



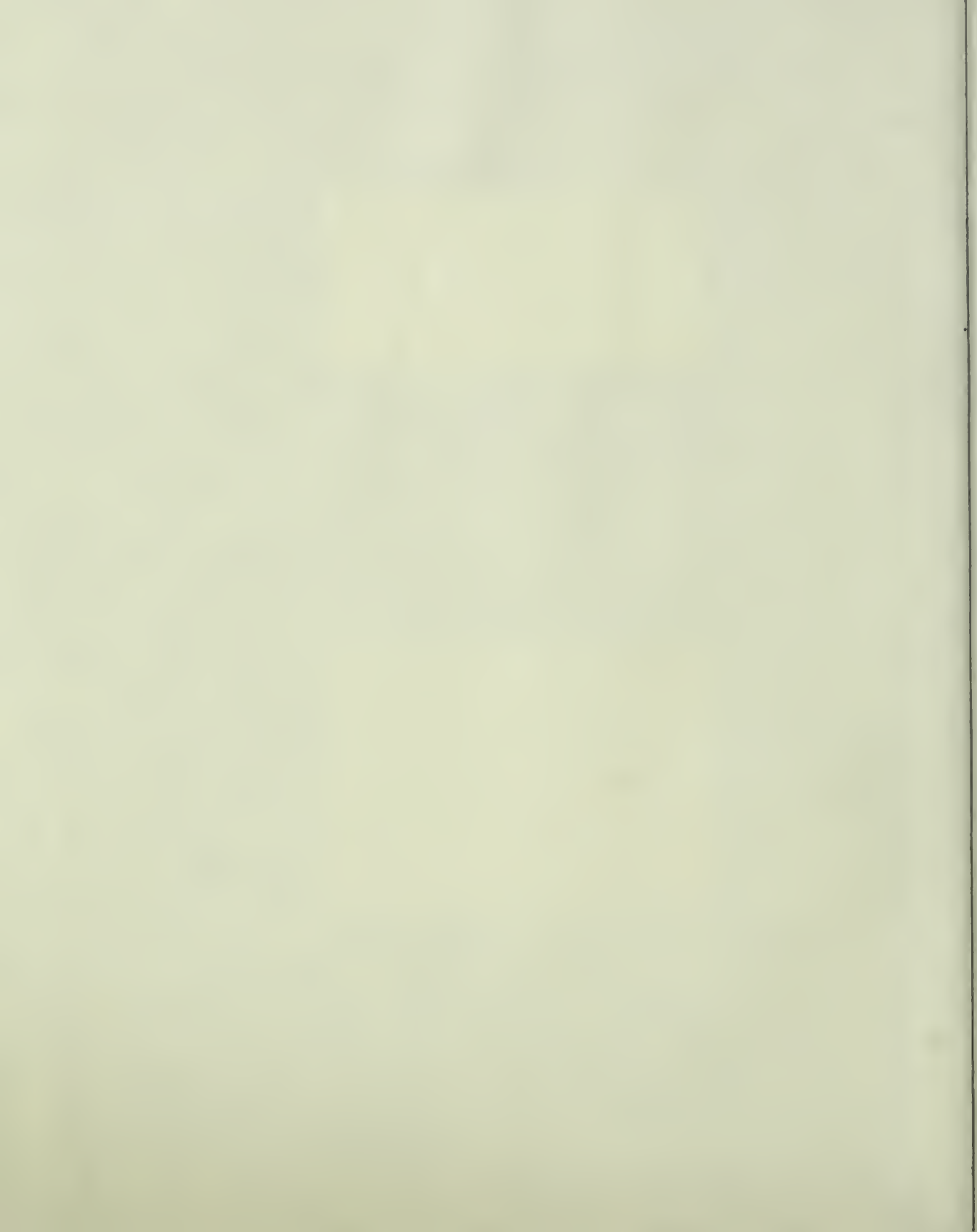


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# Los Angeles, 1781-1981

A Special Bicentennial Issue of California History

spring 1981









# Los Angeles, 1781-1981

Presented by the California Historical Society



THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, founded in 1871, preserves historical materials and facilitates their use by everyone interested in California's heritage. The Society's publications, programs, and library services seek to stimulate interest in and achieve a wider appreciation and knowledge of the historical events and ideas that continue to shape life in California today. Membership is open to all.

Published by the Society since 1922, *California History* magazine investigates the state's history from pre-Columbian to modern times. Illustrated articles, pictorial essays, and book reviews encourage examination of the ongoing historical dialogue between the past and present.

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#### CALIFORNIA HISTORY

Published quarterly: ©1981 by CHS

Annual subscription and membership \$25.00

Student subscription and membership \$15.00

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(714) 268-8334

Articles for publication, books for review and editorial correspondence should be sent to the Managing Editor, P.O. Box 3370, San Diego, CA 92103. Manuscripts should be typed, double spaced, with notes on separate sheets, and submitted in duplicate with a stamped and addressed return envelope. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of the authors.

LC 75-640289

ISSN 0612-2897

Second-class postage paid at

San Francisco, California and additional

mailing offices.

Publication number 084180

#### COVER

A bird's-eye view of Los Angeles in 1894 looking north from the Electric Power House, corner of Wilde Street and Central Avenue. The Los Angeles River flows through the center with Boyle Heights to the right.

*Courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library*

# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

PUBLISHED SINCE 1922

VOLUME LX    SPRING 1981    NO. 1

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SPECIAL ISSUE: *Los Angeles, 1781-1981*

Foreword, *by* JAMES R. GALBRAITH 4

Introduction, *by* LARRY L. MEYER 5

The Distant Pawn of Empire 6  
*by* JOHN CAUGHEY

The Long Black Line, *by* MARY JANE HEWITT 12

Daughters of the Queen, *by* FRANCES RING 18

The Once and Future Majority, *by* ANTONIO RIOS-BUSTAMANTE 24

The Midwesternization of a Cowtown 28  
*by* LEONARD PITT

Down to the Sea in Lighters . . . Then Ships, *by* T. H. WATKINS 32

The Light and The Dark in Local Letters, *by* JAY MARTIN 38

The Genie of Yang-Na, *by* W. H. HUTCHINSON 46

The Laboratory of Marvels 50  
*by* JOHN D. WEAVER

A Sky-Minded City, *by* BRUCE HENSTELL 58

Hollywood Parties: The Way It Was, *by* ARTHUR KNIGHT 64

The Architecture of the City Eclectic, *by* ROBERT WINTER 72

Problems and Promise in Tomorrowland 76  
*by* RICHARD G. LILLARD

The Environment of Movement, *by* JOSEPH GIOVANNINI 82

The Far East in the Far West, *by* DON and NADINE HATA 90

Libels and Labels on the Protean City . . . One Man's Riposte 98  
*by* JACK SMITH

# Foreword

*Founded as Title Insurance and Trust Company (TI) in 1893, Ticor has in a sense come of age with the City of Los Angeles. We helped to link its land and its people, moving from the tumultuous Black Gold boom days of the 1890s, to our present complex and highly urban lifestyle. With this sense of our common past, it seemed especially fitting that Ticor should participate with the California Historical Society by assisting with a grant toward the additional costs of this commemorative publication in celebration of the city's Bicentennial.*

*Part of Ticor's special relationship with the California Historical Society is the CHS Los Angeles History Center which houses the CHS/TI Photo Collection and is located at Ticor's corporate headquarters on Wilshire Boulevard. A well spring of knowledge for the layman and historian alike, the archive is based on the "C. C. Pierce Collection of Rare, Historical and Curious Photographs, Illustrating California, the Pacific Coast and the Southwest." Acquired by Title Insurance and Trust Company in 1941, the collection achieved its greatest fame and recognition under the energetic direction of historian and long-time TI employee, W. W. Robinson. A respected writer, Robinson published many books and pamphlets, including the acclaimed *Panorama, A Picture History of Southern California* (1953). He also served for more than seven years on the Board of Trustees of the California Historical Society and was elected a CHS Fellow in 1961.*

*Ticor is proud of its role in the growth of this city of adventure and vitality. We hope this publication will provide a lasting contribution to our perceptions of Los Angeles — a very special city.*

James R. Galbraith  
Vice President, Ticor  
Member, CHS Board of Trustees



# Introduction

*"... it suddenly occurred to me that, in all the world, there neither was nor would be another place like this City of the Angels. Here the American people were erupting, like lava from a volcano; here, indeed, was the place for me — a ringside seat at the circus."*

CAREY MCWILLIAMS

Cities are the DNA of civilizations. And just as no two human organisms are alike, so no two groups of humans living within the shaping confines of their cities are like the other. Lewis Mumford, that thorough student of cities in history, observed that although they all share institutions and physical features, each city has its own individuality, revealed in human personality traits.

We speak of gay Paris, musical Vienna, hard-working Chicago, and so on. For Los Angeles? Any consensus adjective based on past popular opinion, would likely be demeaning and a challenge to the mental competency of Southern California's city of the plain. H. L. Mencken succinctly dismissed Los Angeles as "Moronia," columnist Westbrook Pegler called it the "civic idiot" of American cities and suggested placing it in the care of a guardian.

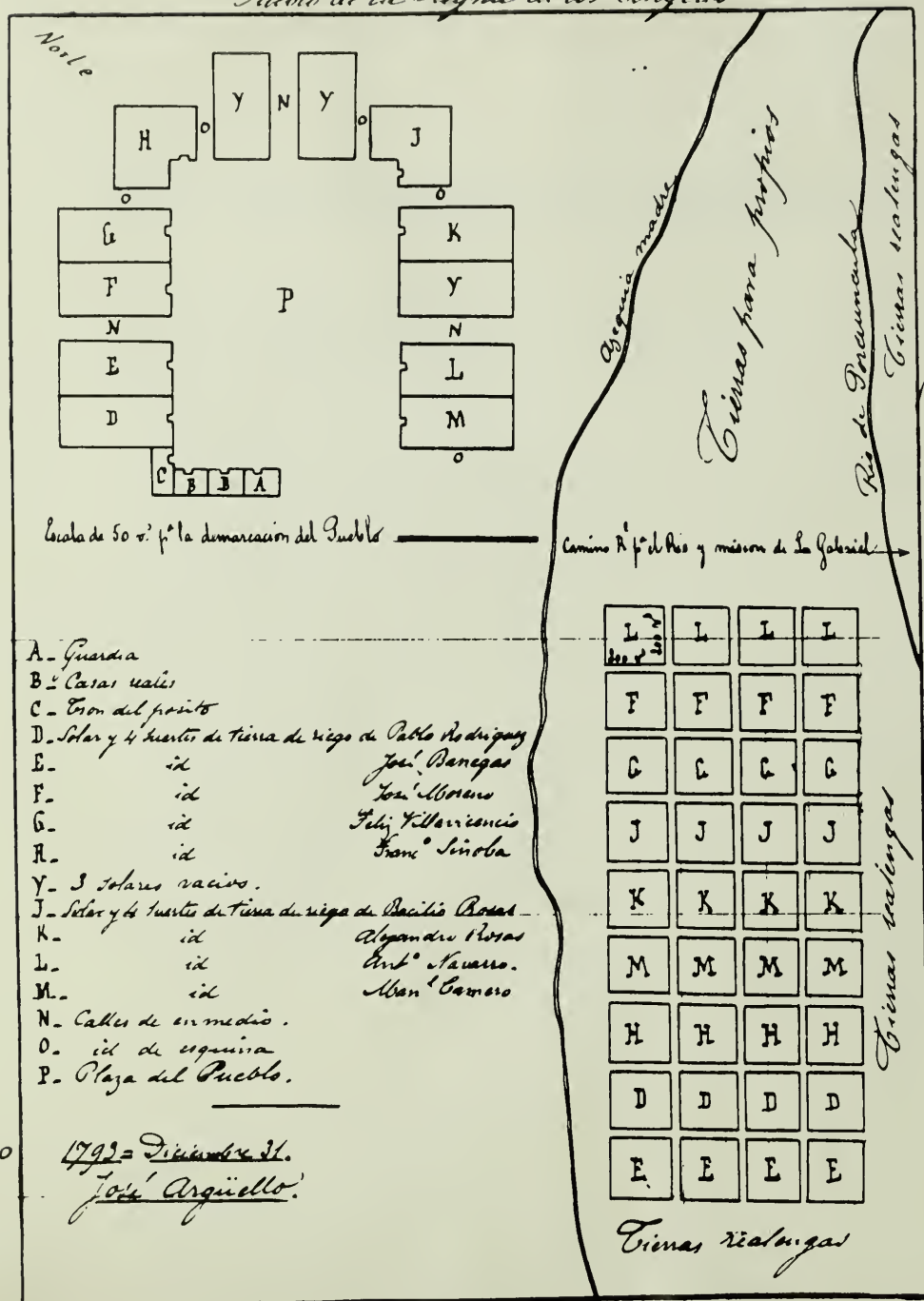
These diagnoses seem rather extreme if not premature, but they do point up an image problem that Los Angeles has long had. To twist that Orwellian phrase, if all cities are inherently unequal, then Los Angeles is more unequal than others. And it may be an unlikely, brash, eccentric upstart of a city. But it is also wonderfully energetic, and even at the tender age of two hundred wields enormous power and influence, and generally encounters the future with its plentiful problems and sometime promise in advance of its kin. Which certainly makes it deserving of a longer and more serious look, especially during its bicentennial year.

The distinguished men and women who have written for this special issue of *California History* bring exceptional qualifications to their tasks. Each is knowledgeable in his or her subject and has performed wonders within the severe but necessary constraints of space. It is also fitting to note that the late Carey McWilliams figured prominently in the conception of this project, but died before he could make his written contribution. Yet his presence is here, quoted as he is by so many of our writers on so many pages. We join in dedicating this issue to the memory of the man who taught us all so much about the City of Angels.

Larry L. Meyer  
*Guest Editor*

# Pueblo de la Reyna de los Angeles

2



A 1793 copy of the original pueblo map of Los Angeles

# The Distant Pawn of Empire

---

THE BEGINNINGS CLOSELY EXAMINED REVEAL LOS ANGELES AS A PAWN in the interplay of empire building. The first three incidents in its history, widely separated in time, are best characterized as false dawns. They produced no immediate local change. Then, more than half way along toward the present, came the founding settlers and the establishment of the Spanish pueblo. Thereafter, Los Angeles may be said to have had a history with continuity.

The recorded history of Los Angeles began in 1542 with a sail-by commanded by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, now immortalized by a beach and highway bearing his name. The chronicle he left is scant.

Cabrillo anchored off Catalina and launched a small boat. Before it reached the shore, "a great number of Indians came out of the bushes, shouting, dancing, and making signs to come ashore." The women prudently fled. The Spaniards made reassuring signs, and shortly "a fine canoe containing eight or ten Indians" came out to the ships and these visitors were given beads and other presents. The Spaniards landed and were greeted by women as well as men and "everybody felt very secure."

The next day the Spaniards crossed the "Baia de los Fumos," Bay of Smokes (San Pedro), where they "captured an Indian canoe." Without landing they pronounced the harbor excellent and the country good. Six leagues farther on they anchored in a large *ensenada* (Santa Monica Bay). At the next stop (beyond Los Angeles County) they were visited by "many fine canoes holding twelve to thirteen Indians each," hence the name Pueblo de las Canoas. That is the substance, indeed, practically the entire record, of Cabrillo's visit.

Sixty years and a month later came the second false dawn, when a larger armada commanded by Sebastián Vizcaíno passed, almost as though guided

---

*"We entered a very spacious valley, well grown with cottonwoods and alders, among which ran a beautiful river from the north-northwest . . . . It has all the requisites for a large settlement. . . ."*

Fray Juan Crespi, 1769

---

by the same script. As he dropped anchor at Cabrillo's island which he now named Santa Catalina, a welcoming committee of Indians of all ages and both sexes ran to the beach. Friendly as they appeared, Vizcaíno took no chances. Along with Fray Antonio he sent ashore a captain and twenty-four soldiers with arquebuses "and their matches lit," that is, ready to fire. The Indians responded with demonstrations of friendliness and affability. By signs the Spaniards asked for water and the Indians brought out a large basket full. The next day two padres went ashore and said mass. By then many more Indians had assembled, "well-built, robust, all naked."

Many further observations are recorded. The canoes were of boards fastened together, some large enough to hold twenty persons. Fishing canoes had two men to wield the double-bladed paddles and a boy in the center to bail. "They paddle on one side and the other in such unison that they go flying." The houses were rush-covered and large enough to hold fifty persons. Xicamas and another root vegetable "like potatoes" are mentioned and a "sacred place" with paintings of "devils" and two very large crows, tame and perhaps revered. When a soldier killed both of them with one firing of his arquebus, the Indians were much agitated. The chronicler also notes that these Indians were very light-fingered, "beating the gypsies in cunning and dexterity."

Sailing on, the fleet was intercepted by a canoe, probably from the Town of Canoes. After it smartly circled Vizcaíno's ship three times, the six men and a boy chanting vigorously as they paddled, the Indian leader grasped a rope, climbed on board, took three more turns around the waist of the ship, chanting as before, then launched into a welcoming speech. By signs he communicated that there were bearded and clothed men in the interior, that all should come ashore to his town, and, noting that no women were aboard, he promised to make up for that deficiency. "Well paid," he then went off to make preparations for the promised visitors. Soon after his departure a favorable wind sprang up and Vizcaíno had to seize it and get on with his exploring.

Here was confirmation and elaboration of the impression Cabrillo had gained about a good land inhabited by intelligent and hospitable natives.

For another 167 years these descriptions of the Los Angeles area were embalmed in the Spanish archives. The rating of the land and the Indians was favorable but not sufficient to prompt Spanish occupation. In fact, the report of the Vizcaíno expedition established the Port of Monterey as the best endowed location along the entire coast.

Then in the summer of 1769 Gaspar de Portolá's ten-day visit yielded much more information about the place not yet known as Los Angeles, its environs, and its people. Portolá had come by the land route from Baja California. Instead of a sail-by his was a ride-through, the greatest exploration ever in the history of California. With sixty men and a pack train he left the camp at San Diego to open a land route to the Port of Monterey. The expedition's three diarists recorded discovery of a succession of plains, valleys, and mountain ranges, major earthquakes experienced, and many grizzly bears encountered. They were intrigued by the tar pits, were the first to see giant redwoods, and from a vantage point on the peninsula discovered San Francisco's magnificent bay. They also met *ranchería* after *ranchería* (villages) of Indians, friendly and inquisitive, some so hospitable that the Spaniards had to ask them to go away



so that they could get some sleep.

The Los Angeles part of this adventure began soon after they crossed the Santa Ana River, to them Santa Ana de los Temblores (of the Earthquakes). Two days later, after riding through a pass between low hills, they came to "a spacious valley" with trees, grapevines, and rosebushes and with good land on both sides to which water could readily be diverted for irrigation. Indians came from the nearby ranchería of Yang-Na, saluted them with three puffs of smoke, and presented strings of shell beads — a reversal of the usual protocol that had the whites giving the beads. The Indians also offered grass seeds and pinole (no doubt acorn mush). The Spaniards named the river Rio de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles de Porciúncula.

The adventure continued. A few miles to the west they came to lakes of bubbling tar, which they thought must have something to do with the earthquakes. They passed other rancherías of friendly people. One entire village was busy harvesting grass seeds. They went on to a ciénega (swamp) and a watercourse issuing from it and then to a spring now claimed by University High School. Scouts reached the ocean and reported no way around the mountains. Sepulveda Pass took them across to Lake Encino where they counted 205 natives who came to see these 60 mounted strangers with their hundred-mule pack train. They crossed mountain-girt San Fernando Valley and, over a more difficult pass northward, reached a ranchería so primitive that the only shelter was a woven fence. Marvelling, they called it Ranchería de Corral.

Having spent ten days in this passage through the environs of Los Angeles, they had grasped its essential landforms and met a generous sampling of its inhabitants. The three diarists in the party agree that the practical discovery of most significance was the advantageous site on the Los Angeles River. Equally important were the numerous, able-bodied, alert, and amiable Indians, because Spanish policy looked toward preserving, christianizing, hispanizing, and engrossing the natives as a major element in the Spanish colony now to be established. But the business at hand, of course, was to get on to the Port of Monterey.

Cabrillo and Vizcaíno had established the lay of the coast of Los Angeles. Portolá established the lay of the land within the Los Angeles Basin. In their logs and field notes these three visitors give the nucleus of knowledge about the natives of the Los Angeles plain and offshore islands — the Gabrielino.

All are agreed that the plank canoe, which may have originated with the Chumash, was the most spectacular culture trait. It was engineer Costansó who set down the analytical description of how these remarkable canoes were made, while all diarists noted the reliance on baskets for seed gathering, storage, holding water, and in cooking, a remarkable substitute for pottery. They recognized the stress on seed gathering and other forms of foraging, but seem not to have grasped the significance of the technique of grinding and leaching acorn meal to remove the tannic acid and make it edible, a process central in the dietary throughout most of California.

Subsequent Spanish and Mexican informants add little more about the native culture as such. They show much more interest in how these Indians adjusted to mission, town, and rancho work.

Ranchero Hugo Reid's letters to the Los Angeles *Star* in 1851 enrich the

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*"Three leagues from the mission is found the Porciúncula River with good water easy to take on either bank and beautiful lands in which it all could be made use of."*

*Felipe de Neve, 1781*

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description of the people and their culture, as does fur trapper George Nidever's account of the Indian woman left alone for eighteen years on San Nicolas, the outermost of the Channel Islands.

Ethnologists came too late to learn much directly from Gabrielino informants, but their studies and the researches by archeologists contribute substantially, together with what is known about surrounding and related tribes.

The estimate is that as much as 2,500 years ago Shoshonean speakers pushed in from the northeast and occupied a wedge between Hokan-speaking tribes to the northwest and along the southern border of present California. The Shoshonean area had about a hundred miles of ocean frontage, mainly the coast of Los Angeles, and about six times that much breadth on the eastern border of the present state. The Gabrielino were the spearhead of this wedge.

By the time of white contact they were firmly in control of their area, highly familiar with its resources that were useful to a people with the tools they possessed, and settled into a pattern that yielded a secure living and many satisfactions. They were numerous. By the reckoning of A.L. Kroeber, the cyclopedic authority on the Indians of California, their number had reached five thousand, a density per square mile exceeded only in a couple of spots north of Mexico. That was the more notable because they were not blessed with irrigated farming as at the pueblos in New Mexico or an extremely rich fishery as on the Northwest Coast. Throughout the Spanish period and the Mexican period they continued to be the largest element in the Los Angeles area. For a while longer they were the principal element in the labor force. As B.D. Wilson put it in 1852, "whatever buildings there were, they built them."

Taking into account the Gabrielinos' rich store of oral literature and their religion, Kroeber sees them as the culture leaders of the California Shoshoneans, obviously in harmony with the land and in sure possession of it against takeover by any of their known neighbors.

In the principal monograph on the Gabrielino, Bernice Eastman Johnston tells of an earlier turning point as communicated in their own understanding of their coming. "Legends are not safe substitutes for history, but it is interesting to note that, as if in memory of the vast empty lands once traversed, a feeling of awe colors a portion of the creation legend in which it is said that the earth grew ever to the southward and the people followed. It is quite certain that these Shoshoneans drifted across from the Great Basin by way of the mountain passes. Legend assigns a camp of the "first people" to a place in Cajon Pass, at a time when "the earth was still soft." No warfare is mentioned, only naked, cold and lonely people, led by a wise "captain" southward into an ever-expanding land."

The Gabrielino had done absolutely nothing to invite or bring on the visits of Cabrillo, Vizcaíno, and Portolá, nor did these explorers come on their own initiative. Each was sent by the Spanish viceroy in Mexico and for imperial purposes.

Between 1492 and 1542, Spain had erected a fabulously rich empire based on the conquest of the Aztecs and the Incas. Spain also had carried out sweeping explorations of the American coast all the way down to the Straits

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*... two days more (to our no small joy) gave us our last view of that place which was universally called the hell of California, and seemed designed in every way for the wear and tear of sailors."*

Richard Henry Dana, Jr. 1838

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## the long black line

Among the eleven families (totalling 44 persons) who participated in the founding of Los Angeles were people classified racially as follows:

Negro-Mulatto — 2 families  
 Indian-Indian — 2 families  
 Mulatto-Mulatto — 2 families  
 Spanish-Indian — 2 families  
 Mestizo-Mulatto — 1 family  
 Indian-Mulatto — 1 family  
 Indian-Coyote ( $\frac{3}{4}$  Indian,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Spanish) — 1 family

Many early California settlers, including those who settled Los Angeles, changed their racial designations from one census period to the next:

NAME	RACE IN 1781	RACE IN 1790
Pablo Rodriguez	Indian	Coyote
Manual Camero	Mulatto	Mestizo
Jose Moreno	Mulatto	Mestizo
Maria Guadalupe Perez	Mulatto	Coyote
Basilio Rosas	Indian	Coyote
Jose Vanegas	Indian	Mestizo
Jose Navarro	Mestizo	Espanol
Maria Rufina Navarro	Mulatto	Mestizo

The rapid miscegenation of settlers of African, European and mixed ancestry, and the discontinuance of the policy of identifying persons by race after 1800, facilitated the creation of a racial mythology. By the 1830s, only newcomers of African American ancestry were thought of as Negroes.

Of the total Los Angeles population of 1,610 in 1850, twelve persons were designated as "colored," and only one of them — Peter Biggs — was listed as not belonging to, or having residence in, a white household. He was a barber with a shop on Main Street. Soon after, they were joined by a free Black, Robert Owens, who would figure significantly in one of the most heroic sagas of early Black California history. To Los Angeles in 1851 came Biddy Mason, a young slave woman, and her three daughters. Biddy Mason fought for and won freedom for herself, her daughters and the other ten slaves that Robert Smith had seques-

tered in Santa Monica Canyon in preparation for removing them to Texas. She was aided by Robert Owens who initiated the legal steps that led to the liberation of Smith's slaves by Judge Benjamin Hayes in a Los Angeles courtroom on January 19, 1856.

Biddy Mason became known for her philanthropy. Hard working, frugal, and a shrewd investor, she amassed a fortune through real estate investments in downtown Los Angeles between Spring and Broadway, Third and Fourth streets. The marriage of her eldest daughter to Robert Owens' son joined two pioneer families who continued the tradition of investment and philanthropy. The fifth generation of their descendants still live in Los Angeles.

As Blacks increased in number after the Civil War, they built institutions and formed organizations, started newspapers and created a business district. It was from the First A.M.E. Church, organized in Biddy Mason's home in 1872, that the first protest against separate schools for Negro children was organized in 1880.

The Black Los Angeles community was organic, and as it grew from 1,258 persons in 1890, to 7,599 in 1910, it spread south, east and west from First and Los Angeles streets. By 1906 Blacks had established a large colony extending as far south as Ninth Street and to Maple Avenue on the east. Boyle Heights was one of the earliest Black sections. The "West Side," extending along Jefferson, between Normandie and Western Avenue and south to 35th Place, was another. The third was the Temple Street area bounded by Beverly Boulevard, Rampart Street, Hyans Street and Reno. The fourth was known as the Furlong Tract area bounded by 51st, Alameda, 55th Street and Long Beach Avenue.

To celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday in 1909, the *Los Angeles Daily Times* published an eight-page supplement titled "The Negro Section." One of its feature articles was contributed by Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Its title was, "Opportunity of



*The achievements of James Beckwourth, Biddy Mason and others are recalled in Charles Alston's panel from the mural "The Negro in California History."*



the Negro in America to Convert Obstacles into Opportunities," which was the tenor of the entire supplement. Black Los Angelinos had already overcome many obstacles.

The Black population of Los Angeles more than doubled in the decade between 1910 and 1920 to a total of 15,579 (2.7 percent of the population), and during that decade, Los Angeles became headquarters for the Southern California Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The Los Angeles Urban League opened its doors in 1921.

The largest Black population movement took place between 1920 and 1930 — to a subdivision called Watts. It became a Black town almost overnight, and its annexation to the city of Los Angeles in 1926 was motivated by fears of whites remaining in the community that they would soon have a Black mayor. The construction of three public housing projects in Watts accelerated this ghettoization of the community. Hacienda Village, the first of these opened in 1942, was designed by three of the most prominent architects of California — Paul Williams, Richard Neutra and Welton Becket. By the end of the 1950s, over one-third of Watts' total population lived in public housing, and the explosion which occurred in

August, 1965, was foreseeable then.

The 1970 Census revealed a Black presence throughout Greater Los Angeles — with the heaviest concentration in South Central Los Angeles, Southeast Los Angeles, and the West Adams-Leimert-Baldwin Hills areas — forming 18 percent of the total population.

There is an irony in Los Angeles' Black history. The majority of the first settlers were Black, and at the first opportunity they shed their Black identity. Yet there is a vibrant spirit in Black Los Angeles which runs all the way from Biddy Mason to Mayor Tom Bradley, with thousands of heroic figures in between: those who fought for the right to be free in California during the slave era; those who built institutions and formed organizations; those who fought for civil rights and economic opportunities; those who fought, and continue to fight, against the distortion of the Black image in the media; and all those who continue to fight for decency, dignity and justice. Today the city can boast of two Black Congressmen, two State Senators, four State Assembly representatives, a former County Supervisor, and the Mayor of Los Angeles. The honor roll is long, but the space allowed here is too short to call that roll.

— Mary Jane Hewitt

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*"With a population of 1200, this is the most thickly settled area in California. . . . The pueblo of Los Angeles is extremely rich, for the spoils from the neighboring missions have fallen into the hands of the local inhabitants. . . ."*

Duflot de Mofras, 1841

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By the late 1760s the imperial problem was materially different. The Seven Years War had eliminated France as a power in America. Along with her more than a dozen Atlantic Coast colonies, Britain had picked up what had been French Canada and the eastern half of the Mississippi Valley. As ransom for Havana, Spain had had to yield East and West Florida. And as a buffer against this British expansion, Spain asked and received from France New Orleans and the west bank of the Mississippi. When a professor sent to govern Louisiana was forced out by a revolution, Spain sent a tough naval officer to establish firm hold on this buffer province.

In that setting, José de Gálvez as inspector general in the viceroyalty of New Spain was aware of British activity in the Pacific and Russian advance in the North Pacific. For the protection of the viceroyalty, he proposed to add a buffer province to the northwest. The king approved. Gálvez then sent 300 men in three ships and two land expeditions from Baja California to rendezvous at San Diego Bay and to occupy Vizcaíno's Port of Monterey. Portolá commanded. One ship was lost at sea, Indian auxiliaries deserted from the land expeditions, and an undiagnosed epidemic took heavy toll on ship and at San Diego. When Portolá set out for Monterey with 60 men, he left behind mainly invalids.

With the founding of a presidio and mission at Monterey, Portolá had completed his assignment and returned to Mexico. Alta California stood as an outpost against foreign aggression, but for the time being the Gabrielino were left the sole occupants of their territory.

Missions San Antonio, San Luis Obispo, and San Gabriel were established in 1771-72. When the viceroy sent enough soldiers and their families so that a presidio and mission could be added at San Francisco, it was possible also to found missions at Santa Clara and San Juan Capistrano.

The missions, however, were not self-supporting and the presidial soldiers, though encouraged to farm, were not succeeding. In 1777, as he came up the trail inspecting every station, Governor Felipe de Neve realized that what was most needed was crop production and that the surest solution would be the establishment of a couple of pueblos. As the most eligible site he picked the one on the Los Angeles River.

The pueblo, or town, was an old Spanish institution familiar on the frontier along with missions and presidios. Albuquerque, Laredo, and San Antonio had such beginnings. Agricultural, civilian, and fundamental units of government, pueblos were intended to grow and to be permanent. By contrast missions and presidios were to be temporary.

Neve made specific and detailed recommendations to the frontier commandant and to the viceroy, which were forwarded to the Minister of the Indies, José de Gálvez, and to the King.

By this time thirteen British mainland colonies on the other side of the continent were in revolt. Spain did not ally with them but entered the war against Britain in 1779. The governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Gálvez, headed the main Spanish strategy in America and in successive campaigns captured Baton Rouge, Mobile, Pensacola, and the Bahamas, thereby recovering East and West Florida for Spain. Along with that effort a bolstering of Alta California made sense. The King gave approval, whereupon authorization was forwarded to the frontier commandant, and he sent Captain Fernando



Rivera to Sonora and Sinaloa to recruit 24 married settlers and 34 married soldiers to go to Alta California.

The *pobladores* (settlers) and their wives and children would be outfitted from shoes to hair ribbons. They would be on the payroll, would be taken to the chosen site, issued seed, stock, implements, and other necessities, provided rations, given *solares* (house lots), *suertes* (irrigable fields), woodlands and grazing lands, and assistance in getting started. They would elect *alcaldes* to govern the pueblo.

Since Rivera could enlist only twelve *pobladores*, one of whom dropped out in Baja California, and the escort was going to California anyhow, the outlay from the royal treasury was moderate. But this was a subsidized, shepherded migration which had no counterpart on the Anglo-American frontier. Exposed to smallpox in Baja California, these newcomers were quarantined away from Mission San Gabriel.

On September 4, 1781, these pioneers moved to the chosen site. Because the launching of the pueblo was the birth of the largest city in the western half of the Western Hemisphere, resourceful writers and artists have panoplied it with elaborate ceremony. Governor Neve was at San Gabriel. They have him heading the procession to the site with the two missionaries, all the soldiers, and a host of neophytes. Mass and rituals and speechmaking are attributed. In 1931, on Los Angeles' 150th birthday, this scenario was enthusiastically acted out.

On the ceremonies of the day there is no record, but cold reason keeps Neve and the missionaries and neophytes at San Gabriel. The present understanding is that the site for taking water from the river, the line of the *zanja*, and the site of the plaza, *solares*, and of the *suertes* had already been selected. The assumption is that Neve delegated the supervision of settlement and that drawing lots was the principal business and the only work done was making camp.

It is doubtful that any American city had a more multi-ethnic start than Los Angeles. In the archives in Mexico a detailed roster of the *pobladores* and their wives and children is preserved. The ethnic classification of each adult also is given. Even with only a score of adults the multi-ethnic representation is impressively broad: mestizos, Indians, Blacks, mulattos, a Spaniard or two, and a chino. Chino could mean a particular kind of mestizo, but certain scholars are convinced that it means a "boat person" from Manila who might have been Pilipino or Chinese.

Documentation on the decision to found the pueblo is complete. It also is abundant on all the goods and supplies issued to each *poblador*, on the certifications for which all signed with a mark. There is evidence, however, that one of the Spaniards was able to write. On November 18 Neve reported that the pueblo had been founded. On September 4, 1786, Sergeant José Dario Argüello came over from the presidio at Santa Barbara, inspected the improvements at *solares* and *suertes*, and confirmed titles to the surviving *pobladores* or their descendants and to each a cattle brand.

After its first year Los Angeles went through its next forty as a Spanish pueblo with virtually no history on record. The California provincial archives were decimated in the 1850s and most that remained were lost in the San Francisco Fire. A few transcripts relative to Los Angeles survive in land case records and others as abstracted by historian Hubert Howe Bancroft's

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*"The Pueblo of Nuestra Senora . . . contains a population of one thousand five hundred souls, and is the noted abode of the lowest drunkards and gamblers in the country."*

Sir George Simpson, 1842

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copyists. But the deeper reason for the lack is that Spain did not require paper work from the pueblo and most residents did not read or write.

The pueblo drew very few visitors. Father Serra arrived late one day and left the next morning for Mission San Gabriel; that is the only comment about his visit. Naturalist José Longinos Martínez passed through in 1792, but what he put into his description was almost entirely about the tar pits. As an inland station, though only about twenty miles from the sea, the pueblo was out of reach for most foreign visitors. Even William Shaler, who wrote so circumstantially about many places on the California coast in 1808, never saw Los Angeles. George Vancouver in 1793 had heard much about "the country town of the Angels" and was keenly interested but could not spy it out from shipboard.

It is recorded that three of the original pobladores turned out to be "useless" and were encouraged to leave with their families, thereby shrinking the population to 32. As W.W. Robinson insisted, realism calls for counting also as residents the four soldiers assigned to the pueblo.

In 1790, the year of the first United States census, by coincidence a count was made in Los Angeles. It reported 141 persons, of whom 80 were under 16 and, as Bancroft read it, nine over 90—an often cited testimonial to the climate's being conducive to longevity. More careful scrutiny of the digits indicates that the nine oldsters were only over 50, which jibes much better with the ages recorded in 1781. These residents of 1790 are classified as 1 European, 72 Spaniards, 7 Indians, 22 mulattos, and 30 mestizos, which is substantially at variance with the proportions stated in 1781. The meanings attached to some of the categories seem to have changed.

This same report credits the pueblo with 2,980 head of large stock, 438 of small, and a harvest of 4,500 fanegas. Subordinate to the pueblo were five ranchos, ranging up to Manuel Nieto's, later measured at 167,000 acres.

In 1795 Fray Vicente Santa María of Mission San Buenaventura observed that "the whole paganhood" between his mission and San Gabriel was "fond of the Pueblo" and that they went about in shoes, sombreros, and blankets and served the pueblo and the ranchos, many of them as muleteers. Shoes, sombreros, and blankets were not Gabrielino traits, nor was working as muleteers. The strong suggestion is that the missions were not the only agency acculturating Indians into the Spanish life style reckoned more valuable to the Spanish empire.

A "diary of occurrences" in 1795 notes election of alcaldes, comings and goings of pack trains to the presidios at Santa Barbara and San Diego, passing of the monthly courier, large numbers going to Mass at San Gabriel, and soldiers and some others singly or in small groups arriving and leaving.

In 1797 a tally was made of 16 young men who might be available as presidial recruits. Six of the 16 were available. Eight were needed to help their widowed mothers or their fathers, and two were not reported because there had not been opportunity to ask their wishes. Clearly this is not a record of registration for a draft.

In 1810 a water dispute developed with the friars of San Fernando Mission who had cut the flow of "the river of the pueblo" at Cahuenga. The friars agreed not to inflict damage to the people of the pueblo and, if necessary, to cease cultivating at the site.

*The City of Los Angeles—after our army arrived and took possession, was orderly and not so ill governed, the citizens moved to and fro, in the most easy, as if their country was not in the least troubled."*

—William Heath Davis, 1846

*Don Vicente Lugo epitomized the caballero of rancho days.*



## the daughters of the queen

The city is a lady . . . El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles. And the feminine presence has hovered over it since 1781. The Lady . . . the Queen, not descended from the mighty Amazon Calafia who ruled over the island of California in the sixteenth century and dominated the male population with such ferocity that only those were spared who could give pleasure and help propagate. It's a gentler image than that . . . a queen of angels.

In La Reina's pueblo, women worked alongside men to cultivate the land, plant their roots and tend the family. And during the time when pioneers and homesteaders made the passage west, women shared the dangers, bore the children, stirred the pot, though they rarely participated in larger decisions. Thus their social character was determined by the limits of the inner family circle in which they went round. The matriarchal myth grew large.

Yet throughout history, there have been *individual* women who have chipped away at the mold into which they were cast. The gentler sex turned tough, the weaker sex strong and the clinging vine, on occasion, strangled.

A spot check on women who broke through the constraints of convention results in a study of contrasts. There was Biddy Mason, a slave in search of freedom who arrived in Los Angeles in 1851. She hired on as a "confinement nurse" to a doctor at a modest wage of \$2.50 a week. But she was survivor-smart and saved enough to buy a piece of property in downtown Los Angeles. By 1891, the property was worth \$200,000.

Was she so far distant from Yvonne Braithwaite Burke, who could have taken an easy road with her obvious beauty and charm, but who chose a political course instead? She went to Congress and back, and subsequently became a Los Angeles County supervisor, managing a career and family with dexterity.

We find Emma Summers, a music teacher from Kentucky who invested meager earnings in oil in the 1890s. By 1900, the wells were so productive that she

went into refining and wholesaling, and sold as many as 50,000 barrels a month to local customers. She became the Oil Queen of Los Angeles — though she continued to teach music after hours. With less spectacular financial results, but with notable success in areas not previously open to women, Lita Belle Hibben, a 1913 law school graduate, became the first deputy district attorney in California; and in 1924 Signal Hill had a woman mayor — Jessie Elwin Nelson; and Maud Davis Baker was the second woman in the United States to have a photo studio, and her daughter Viroque photographed museum-quality portraits of Los Angeles.

And, finally, among the migrants and hopefuls who have always gravitated to the fertile ground of Southern California were two women-in-search-of-the-millennium who came with faith and messianic comfort for sale to seekers in the mystical marketplace. Power and scandal ultimately beset them both — theosophist Katherine Tingley who operated out of Point Loma and was the inspiration for the founding of Krotona; evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson who put on the most dramatic show in town at her million-and-a-half dollar Angelus Temple. Whether these spiritual sisters advanced the cause of equality of women before God is doubtful, but they did get a piece of the action and created a haven for cultists and occultists who still flock to the Promised Land.

Of course, Hollywood also attracted adventurous young women since the first shadows flickered on a screen . . . pretty women, funny women, heroines and parodies of heroines. Some were exploited for their sensuality, while others ridiculed sensuality — from golden-curled Mary Pickford who amassed as much power behind the screen as on it, to the white-gold glamor and wit of the late Mae West, to the goddess glow of Marilyn Monroe. As old images fade, Jane Fonda leads a candid new breed in commitment and purpose from within beauty's shell.

But in areas of film-making other than star glitter (directing, for instance), the lines of resistance to



*Biddy Mason, a slave in search of freedom, arrived in Los Angeles in 1851. She later invested in downtown real estate.*

women became *Maginot*. The legendary Dorothy Arzner and Ida Lupino were two who broke through. In the past 30 years only seven women have directed feature films released by major motion picture studios. No matter that today there is a woman executive at the top of 20th Century Fox.

Literary ladies — some with three names, some with two — have fared better. Is it more respectable to take pen to paper and write in a fine hand? But Helen Hunt Jackson did not sit home and dream up *Ramona* nor did she imagine the plight of the mission Indians; at the other end of the arc, neither did Joan Didion slouch away from recording the scenes of drugs and violence and neuroses that so symbolized the 1960s and 1970s.

Writing, teaching and nursing have been and still are the more heavily feminized professions. Out of a million employed women in Los Angeles in 1978, 29,824 were nurses and 55,515 were teachers. The total female labor force in Los Angeles — 39 percent of the population — is a figure too large to be ignored. So yes, there is a California Women's Savings and Loan and there is a First Women's Bank of California. And into this whole new female-gendered economic world come doctors, lawyers, judges, engineers, stockbrokers, architects — in small numbers, but visible, pursuing their chosen professions without being considered odd.

It's easier than it used to be . . . and then again it isn't. The hangnails of job discrimination on managerial levels insidiously prevail. The male employer deliberates: If she's young and qualified will she get pregnant just as she's getting good? If she's older will she be set in her ways and menopausal? What about family vs. career? The questions are not indigenous to Los Angeles. The sociological shift of the family structure and of sexual attitudes is national.

History may repeat itself, but it does not turn back. Kitchens are not the hearths they used to be. They are mechanized labs. Washday is a 45-minute cycle instead of hours of board-scrubbing. Microwave ovens cook



a meal in minutes. Fast foods satisfy millions. Women have *time* to find out who they are and time left over to run a home, a family and share experiences with a mate without either of them needing to be deprived of fulfillment.

To look at women in 20th century Los Angeles is to see the spectrum: playgirls tall and blonde or tan or black in the light of the sun for which L.A. is famous; single mothers raising a child without being ostracized by society; working women running a long distance race; wives and mothers choosing to remain wives and mothers; and those who use the traditional do-good channels to benefit the community . . . a Dorothy Chandler whose wealth and position give us a monumental Music Center . . . a Margo Albert who is devoted to the needs of the Mexican Americans and who is the spirit behind La Plaza de la Raza.

La Reina can smile enigmatically at the alternating patterns of role-playing in her 200-year-old city. The lights are bright for celebration on a new stage where women who will, can take part in the changing drama of their city's third century.

— Frances Ring

That is not the totality of what is known about the pueblo of Los Angeles over this fifth of the timespan of its bicentennial, but it is a fair representation of the scantiness of the documentation.

As of 1820, just before the end of the Spanish era, Bancroft's carefully calculated estimate is 650 residents at Los Angeles, exceeded only by Monterey's 700, which included more than a hundred presidial soldiers. Thus it appears that, without much paperwork and certainly without any attempt to record its history, the pueblo on the Los Angeles River had become the largest civilian community in Alta California.

Meanwhile, to the south a new empire was taking shape which would bring drastic changes to California and to Los Angeles.

In 1808 a parish priest in the town of Dolores launched a drive for Mexican independence from Spain. For half again as long as was required in the Revolutionary War against England, warfare with much heavier casualties was waged in the viceroyalty of New Spain. The fighting was mostly in central Mexico but reached as far as Texas. Remoteness spared California any involvement other than interruptions of supply ships from Mexico and of payrolls. The pueblo of Los Angeles was even less affected.

Early in 1822 word came that the revolutionists had prevailed and that California was part of the Mexican nation under an emperor. Within months that ruler had been deposed and Mexico, in the American style, became a republic. Once again the Spanish empire, this time by disintegrating, gave Los Angeles a shove in a new direction. Nothing changed overnight, but soon the town was electing delegates to the *diputación*, a provincial council.

Immediately the restriction of trade to Spanish ships was outmoded. The sea-otter traders had had access only by smuggling. Soon British and American ships, by paying fees or duties, could qualify to do business at Monterey and along the coast. Up to this time California had not had a real export commodity. But now British and American ships came, ready to barter for tallow, horns, salt beef, and for hides from the cattle herds that grazed the golden hills.

The port, or rather the roadstead at San Pedro, was known as the worst anchorage along the coast. Shallow water forced ships to anchor well out, and the exposure to the south and southwest made it necessary for captains to be ready to slip anchor and put to sea on short notice. Nevertheless, the two missions, the pueblo, and the ranchos had large herds of cattle and this became the principal California loading port.

Thus it happened, after a few years, that Los Angeles along with the rest of California found itself economically annexed to New England. Round-the-Horn ships carried away its prime money crop, dry cowhides, and these ships became the suppliers of almost everything Californians bought. As Richard Henry Dana put it, they were floating general stores carrying everything from combs and brushes to millstones. This prosperity came to a climax in the late thirties and early forties.

In the Republic of Mexico the mission system was regarded as an inappropriate carryover from imperial Spain. The princely land holdings of the missions, clearly much of the most productive land in the province, seemed to be held merely for the benefit of the neophytes and the Church. The Spanish intention also had been that the missions were to operate only long enough to



Abel Stearns



prepare the Indians to function in the larger society. Secularization was the expected culmination of the missions. It meant changing the missions to parish churches, releasing the Indians, liquidating or apportioning to the Indians the mission property, and letting the lands revert to the king.

A policy of prompt secularization was voted in Mexico, and small programs were initiated by early Mexican governors. In the mid-1830s Governor José Figueroa was instructed to move ahead. On a gradual basis he did so. The results were quick dispersal and deterioration of the Indians, a flurry of grants of former mission lands, often to be stocked with ex-mission cattle, and dispersal also of other mission resources. The pueblo more than ever became the center of a thriving rancho economy and society.

The earliest non-Spaniards who tried to immigrate into Spanish California were sent away. But in the last years under Spain a few English, Irish, or American men did enter, and in the Mexican period the numbers increased. After 1826 fur trappers were coming by overland routes. In Los Angeles most of these men adapted to Spanish-Mexican ways — Abel Stearns became Don Abel; Benjamin D. Wilson, Don Benito; Hugo Reid with his unpronounceable name, Don Perfecto. Marrying into a California family could hasten acculturation and also could lead to management of extensive properties. Or a land grant or a business activity could make such a person influential. Several of these readjusted Yankees were elected alcalde or to other offices.

In 1836 Los Angeles provided California its first vigilance committee. *Rancho Domingo Felix* was murdered by his estranged wife and her paramour, a vaquero from Sonora. The pueblo was aroused, but under law no court in the province could order execution of civilians. Some fifty prominent citizens, convinced that a sterner justice was needed, met at the home of John Temple and organized as a "*junta defensora de la seguridad pública*" to cope with this emergency. They elected Victor Prudon president, Manuel Arzaga secretary, and Francisco Araujo commander of the armed force. They sent to San Fernando for Padre Cabot on the pretext that "a dying Indian" needed his spiritual care. When he did not come, they prepared an elaborate *acta*, proclaiming and justifying their intentions. When the ayuntamiento refused to act, they proceeded with extra-legal justice.

Going to the plaza, they called on the ayuntamiento to surrender the prisoners. Upon its refusal, they forced secretary Narciso Botella to give them the keys to the jail, took the two prisoners, and, having made public announcement and justification, shot the man at 4:30 and the woman half an hour later. The man, it was discovered, had his shackles nearly filed off. After the bodies had been exposed for two hours, they were surrendered to the authorities. The junta volunteered to serve for a few days to help if necessary to preserve order. It then disbanded.

Bancroft identifies 15 of the 55 registered members of the *junta defensora* as foreigners, with a Frenchman, Prudon, as president. The procedure seems to reflect the cutting through regular trial and punishment common on the Anglo-American frontier then at midcontinent. Its formalization seems a forerunner of the San Francisco committees of the 1850s. Later examples in American Los Angeles were, by comparison, reflex retaliation by a mob.

This episode was not typical of Los Angeles in the Mexican period. Government as represented by the *alcaldes* and the ayuntamiento was sparse, but



William Wolfskill



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*"Sad is my heart! Not,  
poor pile of adobes, be-  
cause I am leaving thee  
. . . but because of the  
bright eyes and warm  
hearts of the sunny smiled  
maids, your cheerless  
exterior hides. . . ."*

Lt. John McHenry  
Hollingsworth, 1848

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the need for governmental intervention seems to have been not great.

Rancheros exercised a patriarchal, even familial, control over vaqueros and other members of the work force. Town families were not much different. In addition, an element of cohesion was exerted by the dependence on irrigation and the shared responsibility to maintain the *toma* and the *zanja* and to have equitable access to the water. For the most part life went on smoothly without need for much government.

In the latter part of the Mexican period life on the ranchos, for which Los Angeles was focal, resembled a pastoral utopia. Except at branding time and the *matanza*, when cattle were killed and the hides stripped off, little work was required. Moreover, Indian labor was abundant and capable. The cattle ran free and nature was bountiful. Meat and other good food was abundant and the hide ships provided what else was needed, and luxuries as well. Families were large and inter-related. Meriendas (picnics) and fandangos were frequent. Not surprisingly the romance of rancho society has long been celebrated.

The cattle had been introduced early in the Spanish period and the basics of the rancho culture were Spanish. But it was the package of changes in the Mexican period that brought this manner of life to climax.

Monterey had the seat of government, it was the obligatory port of call and of customs payments, and it was the provincial society center. But Los Angeles was first in population.

Another more distant imperial decision was about to reshape California. Thoughtful visitors saw a likelihood that Mexico would lose California. Its hold was too tenuous, the business of the province had been usurped by foreigners and linked to New England rather than to Mexico, the Russians were already at Fort Ross, the British might come or more simply foreclose on California, the Republic of Texas had drawn a boundary around the entire province, and American westward expansion seemed hell-bent.

There were also new Californians, such as Thomas O. Larkin and John Marsh, who were determined that California become American and old-line Californians such as Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo who saw that as the best outcome. Yet what precipitated action in the years 1846 to 1848 was firm decision-making a continent away. That took place when James K. Polk was elected President, or perhaps when he listed his presidential aims. Certainly it took place not later than when the war that he had invited broke out over blood shed on what very loosely could be construed as American soil. Acquisition of California was a presidential aim and a war aim.

Monterey learned about the war on July 7, 1846, when an American force landed, ran up the American flag, and in a proclamation by Commodore John D. Sloat claimed the province as a permanent part of the United States. Flag raisings followed at San Francisco, San Jose, Sutter's Fort, and, responsive to the Bear Flag Revolt, at Sonoma. By August 13, Commodore Robert F. Stockton reached Los Angeles and could proclaim that the flag now flew "at every commanding position in the Territory." Stockton solidified the American hold on Los Angeles by conciliatory actions, such as having the military band give evening concerts.

The ceremony at Los Angeles could be interpreted not only as the completion of the seizure of California but also as the squaring out of the United States and the achievement of its transcontinental destiny. As a first step the

American negotiators of the treaty closing the Revolutionary War practically doubled the area of the United States by getting a western boundary at the Mississippi rather than at the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. Jefferson then bought Louisiana; John Quincy Adams arranged a treaty that relinquished claims to Texas and south of the 42nd parallel but acquired the Floridas; the President and Congress just before the inauguration of James K. Polk annexed the Republic of Texas; and Polk traded a half title to the Northwest Coast as far north as 54° 40' for a full title to what would become the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. His army of occupation under Stephen Watts Kearny was already at Las Vegas and Tecolote, and within the week would be at Santa Fe laying claim to the entire territory of New Mexico.

A curfew requirement and a regulation against bearing arms led to an uprising in occupied Los Angeles. The token garrison was forced out and Mexican sovereignty reasserted. The American colors were withdrawn to Santa Barbara and San Diego, and an effort to recapture the pueblo was foiled by the Battle of the Old Woman's Gun, in which vaqueros with their lariats maneuvered a salute-firing cannon against marching sailors and volunteers, preventing recapture of the pueblo.

With a hundred dragoons Kearny came overland by the Gila route to San Pascual where his troops were outmaneuvered and defeated by lance-bearing California horsemen. From San Diego six weeks later Kearny and Stockton marched on Los Angeles. At the mesa and at the river Kearny's tactics and superior powder prevailed. The Californians fell back and then elected to capitulate to John C. Frémont. The reconquest of California thus was completed and once again the final action had taken place at Los Angeles. When Los Angeles accepted the reality of American takeover, all opposition ceased.

Through most of 1847 and 1848 Los Angeles had seen much of the American military, officers and men, regular and irregular, on duty and off. Included were Kearny's dragoons, Stockton's sailors and volunteers, Frémont's volunteers, Mormon members of Cooke's overlanders, and members of Stevenson's New York Regiment of volunteers. To say the least, these contacts toughened Los Angeles.

That year and a half of military government was a brief but purposeful transition. The military governors deliberately chose to continue the Mexican type of local government through *alcaldes* and *ayuntamiento*. The soldiers on the scene behaved differently and the changeover produced cultural shocks, some of which are colorfully described by Horace Bell, the old ranger, though it is difficult to separate fact from fiction.

In the summer of 1848 Los Angeles learned of the gold discovery some months earlier at Sutter's Mill, and before long many Angelinos rushed off to the diggings. Some of these forty-eighters had washed for gold in San Francisco Canyon north of Los Angeles, where a discovery had been made half a dozen years earlier. These placers provided the first California gold to be processed by the United States mint in Philadelphia. Before the end of the year some prospectors returned from the American River with much larger pokes of gold. Los Angeles was doubly stimulated, not merely by this substantial increase in the purchasing medium in circulation but by realization that there was a market 400 miles to the north where exceedingly high prices were offered for foodstuffs and other supplies. Cattle drives were the most

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*"This City of the Angels  
is anything else, unless  
the angels are fallen ones.  
An antiquated, dilapi-  
dated air pervades all, but  
Americans are pouring  
in, and in a few years will  
make a beautiful place  
of it . . ."*

John W. Audubon, 1849

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## the once and future majority

In the 1980s, Mexicans will become the majority population group in Los Angeles. As a result of increasing media coverage of Latino population growth and potentialities, this fact does not cause surprise as it might have only a decade ago. And yet, in a sense it is a return to the city's founding in 1781, when the settlers, numbering eleven families and 44 persons, arrived. By background, they were primarily poor farmers from what today comprises the Mexican northwest coast states of Sonora, Sinaloa and Baja California. Ethnically, like most Mexicans today, they were *mestizos*, a racially mixed people. Their language was Spanish and their culture, customs, traditions, and beliefs were those of Mexico's northwest coast in the eighteenth century. To these ethnic and cultural characteristics were added, over time, the influence of Alta California Indians, especially *Gabrielinos*. Many of whom were absorbed into the developing Mexican pueblo.

By the time of Mexico's independence in 1821, El Pueblo de Los Angeles, or simply, Los Angeles, by which name it was already popularly known, was solidly established as an expanding Mexican town, but had also developed a Californio regional identity and cultural expression rooted in rancho life. Mexican culture, as transmitted through tradition and the periodic arrival of new fashions from the southeast, provided the modes of behavior, dress, music, dance, poetry and politics, but these were sometimes adapted to local conditions.

With the advent of war between Mexico and the United States, Los Angeles became the center of Mexican opposition to the invasion. And following the U.S. acquisition of Alta California in 1848, Los Angeles remained a predominantly Mexican town in population for three decades, although Anglo American political, economic and demographic influences increased steadily.

The years from 1876 to 1900, marked the low point of a Mexican presence in Los Angeles. Following the entrance of the Southern Pacific railroad into Los

Angeles in 1876, a series of land booms occurred, accompanied by a large scale in-migration of Anglo Americans and European immigrants who soon outnumbered Mexicans by over ten to one.

Increasingly a minority within a rapidly growing Anglo American city, Mexicans were becoming segregated by residence around the Placita, developed their own institutions, social organizations, newspapers and cultural life, which included regular performances by Spanish language theatre, musicians, singers and the regular observance of Mexican patriotic holidays.

Largely ignored by the larger community, except as a source of low paid labor or alternately viewed as picturesque remnants of a mythical Spanish heritage and as an alleged social problem, Mexican Los Angeles persisted and at length grew again in the twentieth century when the rapid growth of agriculture, light industry and the transportation brought tens of thousands of Mexican workers and their families northwest. Mexican immigration was further accelerated by economic and political dislocations resulting from the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917, which also produced a smaller sector of middle and upper class political exiles. These new arrivals formed new communities — most significantly the barrios in East Los Angeles — from 1900 through the 1930s.

World War II brought major changes. Tens of thousands of local Mexican youth served in the armed forces; while they amounted to 10 percent of the city's population, they constituted 20 percent of its casualty lists. As a result of the wartime labor shortage, Mexican workers, including large numbers of young women, were able to enter semi-skilled and skilled occupations from which they had been previously excluded.

The post-World War II era witnessed demographic and geographic expansion of Mexican communities. Returning servicemen and other community members challenged educational and residential discrimination as well as the lack of Mexican political representa-





*Francisco Sepúlveda served as Los Angeles alcalde in 1825 when it was a possession of Mexico.*

tion. New organizations, such as the American G.I. Forum, Unity Leagues and the Community Service Organization (CSO) were formed.

The year 1967 marked a sharper emergence among socially conscious Mexican youth, which was to soon become known as the Chicano Movement. ("Chicano," a contraction of "Mexicano," which had carried pejorative connotations, was adopted as a militant term of political identification, in contradiction to "Mexican American," which they considered a passive identification symbolizing acceptance of the status quo.)

This assertion of Chicano identity did provide neither a clear ideology nor a unified strategy, and the movement's influence on leaders did not have significant influence on public opinion within the Mexican community — until it took up as an issue the continuing educational neglect of Mexican youth by the public schools.

In March 1968, the Los Angeles Unified School District was shaken by the "Blowout" or walkout of thousands of Mexican students from five high schools, supported by Chicano activities and one of their teachers, Sal Castro. The walkout protested inferior educational conditions that were epitomized by dropout rate of 50 percent for Mexican high school students and precipitated a series of public confronta-

tions at the Los Angeles School Board, where demands for bilingual-bicultural programs in the public schools were voiced, with the Chicano movement in the role of spokesman.

Following the Blowout of 1968, the Chicano movement in Los Angeles launched the Chicano Moratorium, which mobilized Mexican youth and the community against United States involvement in Vietnam, where Mexicans again suffered a disproportionately high casualty rate. The moratorium met police repression. Unaccustomed to such large and militant demonstrations by the Mexican community (20,000 to 30,000 at the National Chicano Moratorium, on August 29, 1970), law enforcement agencies overreacted with an attack on the demonstrators in which several persons were killed, including *Los Angeles Times* reporter, Rubén Salazar.

Following the Moratorium, the Chicano movement organized an independent Mexican political party, La Raza Unida, in Los Angeles in 1971. While gaining ballot status in California for several years and running a series of candidates, the party was unable to expand further, and its present stagnation can be explained in large measure by a shift in voter interest generated by the election of several Mexican legislators in the mid-1970s, including State Assemblymen Art Torres and Richard Alatorre from Los Angeles and the appointment of other officials, such as Los Angeles Deputy Mayor Grace Montañez Davis.

In the middle and late 1970s, the major organizational focus of the Chicano movement shifted to the defense of undocumented immigrants, even as the movement has gradually diffused in what has become a much more complex political Mexican Los Angeles. This growing complexity is based on a gradually increasing number of professional Mexican politicians, the development of diverse political constituencies and a political process increasingly dominated by a growing Mexican middle class, which, ironically, has risen in large measure as the result of new opportunities created by the Chicano movement.

— Antonio Rios-Bustamante



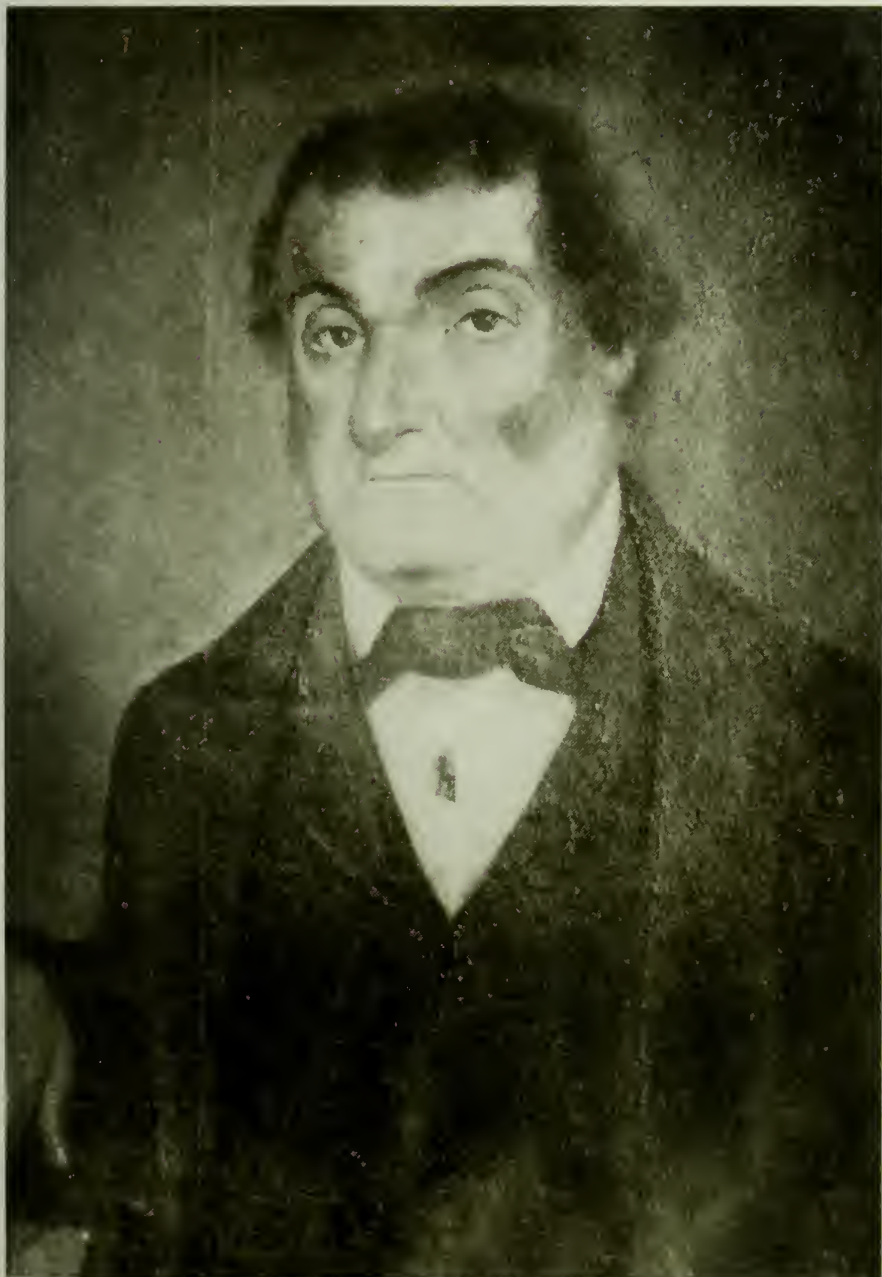
spectacular responses, but shipments of flour and grain, fruits and aguardiente also were sent north.

Well into the summer of 1848 Los Angeles also learned that the United States and Mexico had ratified a treaty of peace. Sloat, Stockton, and all the military leaders in Alta California had insisted that Alta California would be a permanent part of the United States, not to be returned to Mexico at war's end. Other naval officers campaigning in Baja California were making exactly the same promises there. Those in Alta California, so to speak, were heard by the treaty negotiators in Mexico, those in Baja California were not. The boundary set in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ran south of almost all of New Mexico and between Alta and Baja California where it runs today.

What this transfer meant to the United States is sometimes debated. To California and especially to Los Angeles, it was unquestionably the most significant of all changes. Annexation put Los Angeles into the United States common market. Even more important, it tipped the transition already begun from the Spanish-Mexican culture pattern to the Anglo-American. Again an imperial decision far from the scene changed Los Angeles' destiny.



*Los Angeles was beginning to grow  
when this sketch was completed in 1854  
The plaza church is at the left.*



*Powerful and charming, able  
and impetuous, José  
Antonio Carrillo was a  
dominant presence in  
Mexican California and a  
habitual fomenter of  
rebellion.*



Yankee William Wolfskill married into the Lugo family and planted two acres of oranges in 1841. Within two decades he had 100 acres of orchard between Fourth and Seventh streets.



# The Midwesternization of a Cowtown

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IN 1848, HOVERING ON THE EDGE OF A TIME WARP, IN WHICH CHANGE WAS foreshortened and time itself was compressed, Los Angeles was still very much a Mexican pueblo. The Mexican-American War had left it untouched in outward appearance. It remained a town of rectangular white-roofed adobes clustered along a broad river bank near a range of hills. The census taker in Los Angeles, in 1850, counted about 1,600 souls, with a thousand more living on various ranchos within a radius of some thirty miles. Most Angelinos lived off the land, raising cattle, corn, wheat, vines, and fruit trees. The vast majority were of Mexican background: of the 103 household heads described as farmers in the town of Los Angeles in 1848 only eight were gringos. Of the 4,000 inhabitants of Los Angeles County in 1853, not more than 300 were native to other states.

The placita, the open space laid out by Spanish settlers and ringed by homes, stores and other buildings, was still the center of the town. The Catholic Church, *Nuestra Señora la Reyna de los Angeles*, on the west side, was the only religious institution in town. Its bells tolled at six in the morning and eight in the evening to regulate the daily activity of the townspeople.

Social classes were clearly drawn, but they crossed over ethnic lines, and the elite included gringos as well as Mexicans, including those with dark skins. They shared a common disdain for gamblers and other "low life," whether of Spanish or Yankee origin.

The first dramatic transformation in the Yankee era occurred on the level of government. After the brief interregnum during which the U.S. Army retained the Mexican form of government, the new state legislature authorized the formation of new cities and counties in California. The City of Los Angeles came into being in 1851 with a mayor and common council replacing the old ayuntamiento. They went into action swiftly to deal with the 17,000



acres of pueblo land that the city fell heir to. Believing that this land should be a liquid asset rather than a public trust to be held indefinitely, they decided to auction it off cheaply to private owners. They hired Lieutenant E.O.C. Ord in 1851 to draw up a map projecting future streets and town lots, and he produced a document which set the pattern for future town developments. While the selling of lots at auction represented a sharp break with Hispanic precedent, it was fully in keeping with the Yankee free-enterprise tradition. The Council later took a similar approach toward public water, gas, electricity and transportation. Thus the sale of public land ushered in a new political economy.

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*"I have no hesitation in saying that in the years of 1851, '52 and '53, there were more desperadoes in Los Angeles than in any place on the Pacific Coast, San Francisco with its great population not excepted."*

Major Horace Bell,  
remembering the  
early 1850s

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Along with the City, there emerged the County of Los Angeles between 1850 and 1852 with a large and sophisticated government structure consisting of five supervisors, a sheriff, recorder, tax assessor, treasurer, criminal court judges, surveyor, coroner, clerk, and others. In form, neither the county nor city government was particularly innovative; when Americans inaugurated new democratic institutions on the frontier they copied what was familiar back home. But familiar as the new government structure was to Americans, it was very different from what had existed in the Mexican era.

A second area of major change was in the matter of economics and social structure which resulted from the breakup of the rancho economy and the ranchero class. During the Gold Rush the rancheros temporarily prospered owing to the demand for beef in the northern gold mines. In the early 1850s cattle were more valuable as beef than they had been for their hides and tallow in pre-Yankee days. Dazzled by the prospects of the beef trade in the Sierra Nevada, the oldtimers rounded up their cattle and drove them into the northern mining camps. With their newly earned profits they built second-story additions to their pueblo homes and bought elegant new furnishings and personal effects. Silver bridles, lace mantillas, and Chinese crockery added luxury and a sense of richness to their lives.

But the days of the rancheros were numbered. California squatters pressed for, and received, a new federal land law in 1851 that compelled the old titleholders to appear before a special tribunal to validate their property titles. Innumerable proceedings before the California Land Commission dragged on for years. The besieged claimants paid dearly in lawyers' fees and ultimately in land, which they turned over to their lawyers in lieu of cash. In addition, a season of devastating floods occurred in 1861 and 1862, followed by two years of intense drought in 1863 and 1864, which killed their cattle by the thousands. The sheriff auctioned off the rancho lands for delinquent taxes, and property that was tied up in the courts was devalued when sold on the open market. Nor was land devoted to grazing as productive as it could have been had its owners turned to more intensive forms of agriculture which were alien to most of them.

So the rancheros lost ground economically and socially as property changed hands. By 1858, of the 45 principal land owners in Los Angeles County, 25 were of Yankee background and 20 were Hispanics. The two largest individual taxpayers were Abel Stearns, assessed at \$186,000 and John Temple, at \$89,000. Both were Yankees married to local Hispanic women.

The high level of social violence that characterized Los Angeles in the 1850s and 1860s was also new. Mexican Los Angeles had been a relatively peaceful



town, but the mood had changed drastically during the Gold Rush. When Charles Dwight Millard wrote of Los Angeles at the turn of the century, he characterized the years from 1850 to 1870 as "the darkest chapter in the history of Los Angeles." He believed that "it was undoubtedly the toughest town of the entire nation," containing "a larger percentage of bad characters than any other city for its size," and that it "had the greatest number of fights, murders, lynchings and robberies." Over fifty lynchings occurred in the two decades — far more than in San Francisco, which was famous for its vigilance committees. One Los Angeles lynching was actually led by Mayor Stephen C. Foster.

There were also an average of two legal hangings per year, while two city marshalls and three county sheriffs died in the line of duty. In "Nigger Alley," south of the plaza, where gamblers, prostitutes and desperados held forth, life was especially cheap. According to one newspaper, in the 1850s the killing rate in the brothels, gambling dens, and saloons of this street averaged about one corpse per night — an astonishing number for a town of only some 2,000 people.

This violence derived from a peculiar combination of elements brought on by the Gold Rush. Willard attributed it largely to external causes, the evil characters expelled by the San Francisco vigilantes and the desperate young Californios who imitated these miscreants. But there were local causes, as well. However "sleepy" a village it may have been, Los Angeles was on the main traffic lanes to and from Northern California, and as such absorbed all of the unsettling effects of the Gold Rush. A high degree of transiency and rapid social and physical mobility characterized the state in the years from 1849 to 1855 and a gambling spirit infected much of the population. Moreover, a residue of wartime nationalism incited both Mexicans and Yankees against one another. Land hunger and squatterism among the Yankees, organized banditry among the Mexicans and rebelliousness among the young Californios displaced from the land, produced an explosive combination. For weeks and months at a time Los Angeles fell under a siege of banditry, or vigilantism, or both.

In faraway Boston, Protestant clergymen identified Los Angeles as ripe for missionizing, packed their Bibles and headed West. What they found on arrival was that many of the Protestant males of good standing in the community had, as a formality, converted to Catholicism when they married Mexican women, while the rest were indifferent to religion. The religious style of the "City of Angels," even of the Catholics in it, was casual; no one got very excited about religion.

The Rev. James Woods tried to establish a Protestant congregation in 1853, hoping to start a moral crusade, but he could never attract more than a dozen people to a Sunday sermon, and those were mainly women and girls. Reluctantly, he tried to establish some rapport with the Catholic clergy in order to enlist their support. According to his diary, he spent a good deal of his time in a state of depression, complaining repeatedly about the "idolatry" and "paganism" of the "city of lost demons," before leaving town in 1855 completely disillusioned. Not until 1869 did the first Protestant congregation establish permanent roots in Los Angeles.

Although they shied away from church, Yankees were great joiners and created a number of voluntary associations. Among new fraternal, charitable

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*"The name of this city in Spanish is the city of the angels, but with much more truth might it be called at present the city of Demons."*

Reverend Joseph Woods,  
1854

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## down to the sea in lighters... then ships

It was not much of a place, really — and never had been for much of the nineteenth century. The port of San Pedro it was called, a clutch of shacks and adobe buildings on the shores of a harbor that was little better than an open roadstead, exposed to contrary winds and so shallow that such goods as hides and tallow had to be lightered out to waiting ships. “What had brought us into such a place we could not conceive,” Richard Henry Dana wrote in *Two Years Before the Mast* in 1838. “I learned to my surprise that the desolate looking place was the best . . . on the whole coast.”

Major Horace Bell was hardly more enthusiastic in 1853 when he noted that San Pedro was “a great place; it had no streets, for none were necessary. There were two mud scows, a ship’s anchor and a fishing boat . . . broken down Mexican carts, a house, a large haystack and a mule corral.” Yet this “desolate looking place” ended up as Los Angeles Harbor, the largest man-made port in the world. How this came to be is instructive, for if, as Carey McWilliams once wrote, Los Angeles itself was “conjured into existence,” the creation of her port was no less an act of legerdemain.

The tiny indentation in the Southern California coast was first encountered by Europeans in 1542, during Cabrillo’s voyage of discovery. Cabrillo named it *La Bahía de los Fumos* — the Bay of Smokes, after the Indian fires burning in the hills above the little harbor. Later, to commemorate the feast day of Saint Peter, the name was changed to San Pedro. The good saint could not have been much impressed, for it was not until after the Mexican Revolution of 1822 that the little port began to see much business, most of that confined to the trading of local hides and tallow in exchange for manufactured goods from the eastern United States, and even after the American conquest growth continued only in fits and starts. Entrepreneur Phineas Banning built a small wharf and warehouse there in 1851, and when a gale destroyed them in 1858 he founded the village of New San Pedro (later Wilmington) to land goods for freighting inland to Los

Angeles. Troops were quartered in the new town during the Civil War, and in 1868 a railroad was laid between it and Los Angeles.

Enter the Southern Pacific Railroad — as was so often true of California’s nineteenth-century life. In 1869, the Big Four’s conglomerate purchased the tiny railroad and extended it from Wilmington to San Pedro, and when the citizens of Los Angeles began petitioning Congress for federal aid to convert the still largely unprotected harbor into a genuine working port, the Southern Pacific threw its not inconsiderable support behind the idea. In 1889, a delegation from the Senate Committee on Commerce was led to San Pedro by none other than the railroad’s president, Senator Leland Stanford, who extolled its obvious virtues. Senator William B. Frye, the committee’s chairman, was not persuaded. “Well, as near as I can make out,” he is reported to have said, “you propose to ask the government to create a harbor for you, almost out of whole cloth. . . . It will cost four or five millions to build, you say; well, is your whole country worth that?”

Considering the Senator’s opposition to a port at San Pedro, considering the fact that he let it be known that he would prefer that harbor to be at Santa Monica, and considering — above all — the fact that the Santa Fe had already made a railroad connection at Redondo and was soon getting the lion’s share of shipping to and from Los Angeles, the Southern Pacific did a swift about-face: it bought up waterfront land at Santa Monica, built a 4200-foot pier there, hooked up its own branch railroad to the place, and immediately, in the person of Collis P. Huntington, began to put pressure on Congress for federal money to improve the harbor the company had invented.

The “city-makers” of Los Angeles (as Remi Nadeau has called them), chief among them Harrison Gray Otis of the *Times*, were not entranced with the notion of having the city’s flow of commerce to and from the sea securely in the hands of the Southern Pacific, and for a time it seemed that the federal



government was on their side. Beginning in 1891, two board of army engineers reports in a row declared the port of San Pedro to be preferable over that of Santa Monica for federal harbor improvement monies. But Huntington, as competent and determined a lobbyist as had ever invested the halls and closets of Congress, managed to block all recommended appropriations for San Pedro — and when Los Angeles did work a small appropriation into the Rivers and Harbors Bill of 1896, went before the House committee and succeeded in getting a \$3,000,000 appropriation for Santa Monica shoehorned into the bill as well. The choice was now clear for Los Angeles: either capitulate to the Southern Pacific and get the small appropriation, or fight and risk the loss of any money at all.

Los Angeles decided to fight. The city's principal warrior was Stephen M. White, a Los Angeles lawyer who had been sent to the U.S. Senate in 1893. The most important single moment in his young political career came when the appropriations bill went to the floor of the Senate for debate, and he measured up to it. He rose to speak, demanding that an amendment be

attached to the bill appointing a new commission of engineers to determine once and for all which port should get the money — a notion the Southern Pacific found reprehensible. "They decline," White said, "to submit their arguments to competent scrutiny. Why? Not because they think their success possible. . . . They decline because . . . they know that no impartial and competent tribunal will decide in their favor. They fear fairness!"

The argument was persuasive as well as eloquent. White's amendment was indeed worked into the bill, which was signed into law before the end of the year, and to no one's surprise — including that of Collis P. Huntington — the third commission found in favor of San Pedro in 1897. On April 26, 1899, the first carload of rock for the breakwater that created the outer harbor was dumped into the water amid suitable civic pomp and ceremony, the first exercise in the process that would make Los Angeles, that town in the middle of an inland plain, one of the great shipping centers of the world.

— T. H. Watkins





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*"The song of Mignon  
came vividly before me  
as I walked through the  
gardens of the City of  
Angels. Luscious fruits,  
of many species and un-  
numbered varieties,  
loaded the trees. Gentle  
breezes came through  
the bowers."*

John S. Hittell, c. 1850s

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and cultural groups established by 1860 were the Masons, Odd Fellows, Hebrew Benevolent Society, French Benevolent Society, Teutonia Concordia (Turnverein), Los Angeles Mechanics Institute, and Library Association.

Political life also changed under the Yankees. A party system emerged full blown around the time of the 1852 presidential election, which resulted in a landslide for Democrat Franklin Pierce and the demise of the Whig Party. Los Angeles Democrats were mostly Catholic northerners and pro-slavery southerners who managed, through socializing, editorializing, and speech making, to put their stamp on local politics. They wooed the Mexican voters by appealing to the rancheros, who in turn guided the lower classes, and together they turned Los Angeles into a Democratic stronghold. *El Clamor Público*, the Spanish-language vehicle of the free-soil Republican, Francisco Ramirez, struggled valiantly against the prevailing roar, but was forced into silence in 1869.

When the Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter in 1861, Rebel sympathizers raised Confederate flags over the plaza. But in the end Los Angeles, like all of California, remained loyal to the Union. The war itself had minor impact locally. Sons and fathers enlisted in the Union Army and some did a short stint at Drum Barracks in San Pedro, while others were dispatched to Fort Yuma for a lonely, uneventful tour of duty.

Demographic and cultural changes came slowly. For two decades Mexican-Americans remained strongly represented in the population — 47% (2,069 out of 4,385) in 1860, and 38% (2,160 out of 5,728) in 1870. Bilingualism lingered even among Yankees, and school children, if they were taught at all in the 1850s, were taught mostly in Spanish. Some local judges used English and Spanish interchangeably in their courtrooms, and at least one of them, District Judge Joaquin Carrillo, used Spanish exclusively for the fourteen years he sat on the bench. Local journalist Horace Bell referred to Los Angeles in those days as a "semi-gringo" town.

With between a half and a third of the population Mexican, and with residential segregation not yet crystallized, one did not yet speak of a "Mexican *barrio*," although north of the plaza was a distinctive neighborhood founded in the 1850s by Mexicans returning southward from the gold country. Here in what was called Sonora Town the poorer Mexicans settled into adobe houses, and by 1880 it would form the nucleus of the first Mexican *barrio* in this or any other U.S. city.

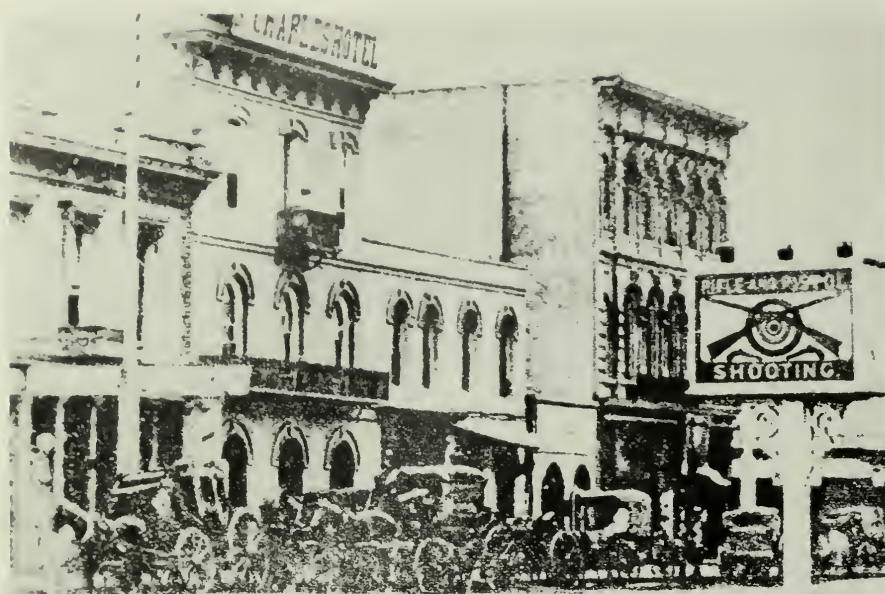
Of the two cultures represented architecturally in Los Angeles — the Mexican and the American — the Mexican predominated into the mid-1870s, according to Ludwig Salvador. But as new tracts developed, particularly in the southern parts of town, more homes were constructed of wood, until the number of frame buildings quickly surpassed the adobes.

The old plaza retained its identity as the center of town until about 1870, when the action began moving steadily south. Pio Pico and several associates invested a considerable fortune constructing the hotel known as the Pico House on the south side of the plaza. Completed in 1869, this handsome masonry pile — the first three-story building completed in Los Angeles — ranked for a while as one of the West's fashionable and popular hotels. Its developers hoped it would anchor the town's business community to that spot, but the Pico House's success faded as the city advanced.

Lieutenant E.O.C. Ord of the U.S. Army mapped the heart of Los Angeles in 1849, thus allowing for the orderly gringo traffic in real estate.







*The St. Charles Hotel, north on Main Street, about 1860. The city was lightly touched by the Civil War, though Wilmington prospered with Drum Barracks, whence the camel express (below) departed for Tucson, c. 1865.*





Other signs of architectural change became visible. The city's fathers updated the city's water works in 1867-1868 by constructing a squat brick reservoir in the middle of the plaza. To this ungainly but efficient structure they hooked up a network of iron pipes that replaced a system of older, wooden conduits. Brick was not as popular as either adobe or wood, since the basic ingredients for good brick were scarce. Elsewhere in the downtown area iron-framed structures designed in the beaux arts style — "General Grant modern," as it has been called — appeared in the 1870s.

Apart from Anglos and Hispanics, there had once been a third cultural and ethnic element in Los Angeles — the Gabrielino Indians. They had lived on the banks of the Porciúncula River for thousands of years in a village called Yang-Na. During the Spanish and Mexican eras some had lived at Mission San Fernando and at Mission San Gabriel, but they left when the missions were secularized in the 1840s, to become part of the labor force of the ranchos and pueblos, while maintaining their own villages in scattered locations throughout the basin.

After the Yankee takeover a few Gabrielinos found brief protection at a U.S. reservation at Fort Tejon. An experimental farm worked by 25 Indians brought in 52,000 bushels of grain on 26 acres of irrigated land in 1854. Yet, despite its promising beginnings, the reservation was soon closed.

In Yankee Los Angeles, Indian ranch hands and vineyard laborers often were paid in brandy. By Saturday night many had been arrested for disorderly conduct and spent Sunday behind bars "drying out" for Monday, when the jailer auctioned them off to local rancheros and vineyard owners to work off their fines. This servitude was legitimized by a city ordinance of August 16, 1860, which declared that "chain gang prisoners could be auctioned off to the highest bidder for private service."

The combined effect of Spanish, Mexican and Yankee dominance served to strip the Indians of their communal lands, destroy their culture, expose them to disease and alcoholism, exploit their labor, and deny them legal equality. A gentle people with a delicate culture, they were not to survive the Americanization of the pueblo.

Although racial and ethnic lines were loosely drawn at the beginning of the American period, by the late 1850s racial bigotry or, more precisely, white supremacy, became a potent force, with discrimination against the Chinese assuming pathological proportions.

One of the ugliest racial incidents ever to take place in an American city occurred in Los Angeles on October 26, 1871, a day on which there were probably fewer than 200 Chinese in a population of 5,700. An economic slump had depressed local pay scales and thrown many white workers out of their jobs. The Chinese servants who worked for "coolie wages" in the more affluent households became easy targets for the frustrated white working class. And when a white policeman stepped in to settle an argument involving members of two rival Chinese tongs, and was killed, a riot ensued. A mob of 400 whites took possession of the city for eight hours and went on a crusade to kill *all* the Chinese. Brandishing guns and ropes they focused their wrath upon the Chinese neighborhood around Sanchez Street. The sheriff and a party of "law-and-order" Anglos and Mexicans made a futile effort to protect the Asians, and the Chinese who fled were shot or hanged. Meanwhile, the long

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*"Earthquakes occur  
fairly frequently,  
usually in August."*

Ludwig Salvador, 1876

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## the light and the dark in local letters

The first literature of Los Angeles was what its settlers brought from elsewhere, the classic works of English and European literature, the practical handbooks and manuals of instruction needed by settlers, and the American literature written by established authors of the Eastern seaboard.

The first book that was fully a production of Los Angeles — one that was written in the city about the city by one of its inhabitants, and later printed and bound in the city — was Major Horace Bell's *Reminiscences of a Ranger*, published in 1881. Appropriately, this book has as its subject the very same settlement of Los Angeles of which the book is the literate fulfillment. Bell was one of several early citizens who in its early days banded together to preserve law and order, calling themselves "Rangers." Like so many post-frontier writers, Bell exhibits a fondness for tall tales, and he combines an admiration for civilization with a nostalgia for the wildness lost in the civilizing process.

In its subsequent development Los Angeles literature followed two increasingly divergent paths. It was, on the one hand, insistently genteel, and on the other, wild; conserving, but also rebellious; hopeful and skeptical; concerned with the smiling prospects and also the darker aspects of life. Taken as a whole, then, Los Angeles writers have responded to the city with something of the diversity and complexity of the city itself.

From the outset right to the present, the genteel, more hopeful imagination has ruled the development of local literature. Most of the earliest books published in and concerning the area were promotional: the title of Henry Friend's *Picturesque Los Angeles County* (1887) speaks for itself. Even as late as 1916, in a symposium of *Out West Magazine*, to the question "What's the Matter with Los Angeles?" one participant resoundingly answered "Nothing!"; and Rev. Baker E. Lee added: "California is the smile of God and Los Angeles is the dimple in that smile."

Other writers didn't look so much to the past as

they did to the culture of the West. Founded in 1914, the Verse Writers Club of Southern California published three volumes of verse by its members to offer evidence of two truths: that Los Angeles writers were as tasteful as writers anywhere, and that they were also distinctively Western writers. In his introduction to the 1930 volume, Colin Palmerston makes this point explicitly. Los Angeles authors, he says, are "broadly cosmopolitan"; but, in addition, "those who seek in this volume some distinctly western melody are not to be disappointed."

Superficially, Charles Bukowski scarcely seems appropriately classed with the genteel writers, but beneath the gruff exterior of his work is a tendency to boost Los Angeles that blossoms in a book like his *Anthology of L.A. Poets*. Here Bukowski declares L.A. a fine city for poets, attacks those who mock it, and attempts, in his selections, to identify poets who respond positively to the Los Angeles experience, especially in the celebration of Hollywood and movie stars (John Wayne, Gary Cooper) as indigenous sources for the literature of the seventies. Today the genteel, self-congratulatory, conservative view of Los Angeles in literature is safely preserved — sometimes embalmed — in the "Westview" page of the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*.

But the picturesque, promotional view of Los Angeles has not gone unchallenged. Beneath its prevailing emphasis upon the smiling aspects of life, in local literature there has always been a continuous undercurrent of doubt and a concern for the problematic conditions of existence in a city perched on the continent's edge. As early as 1880, a Los Angeles writer named P.W. Dooner wrote of America's demise in *The Last Days of the Republic*.

The first volume of poetry by Robinson Jeffers was written and published in Los Angeles. Titled *Flagons and Apples*, this book was unusually pessimistic. Jeffers anticipated other apocalyptic writing about Los Angeles in suggesting that the city both spawned and murdered dreams, "for our country here at the west of





Culture had its champion in the brilliant eccentric Charles Fletcher Lummis (far left), who walked to Los Angeles from Ohio, edited *The Land of Sunshine* magazine and, as seen here, built his home of native rock with his own hands.

things / Is pregnant of dreams.”

This is precisely the theme of Nathanael West in *The Day of the Locust*. Each in his or her own way, scores of other writers have similarly found revealed in Los Angeles the dark underside of modern life. Horace McCoy’s depiction of personal and social desperation in *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?*; F. Scott Fitzgerald’s and Norman Mailer’s anatomies of Hollywood in *The Last Tycoon* and *The Deer Park*; James M. Cain’s and Raymond Chandler’s castigations of the moral rot and loss of ideals in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and *Farewell, My Lovely*; Henry Miller’s satires on this shabby local culture in *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*; John Didion’s representation of waste-land lives in *Play It as It Lays*; and Thomas Sanchez’s *Zoot-Suit Murders* — these are all representative works of the skeptical, self-questioning side of Los Angeles literature.

Three fairly recent developments in the history of Los Angeles literature offer evidence that literary culture has matured. First, as far back as the 1930s,

beginning, say, with Thomas Mann and continuing today in the person of Brian Moore, Los Angeles has drawn writers from abroad who simply make it a place of residence, quite apart from any consideration of employment in the movie studios.

Second, by the 1950s there was a sufficient body of Los Angeles literature that it began to attract critical and scholarly scrutiny. In 1950 Franklin Walker began the serious study of Los Angeles literature. This study has been brilliantly and gracefully amplified by Lawrence Clark Powell in articles for *Westways* and in his book *California Classics*. From a scholarly point of view, Walter Wells added other dimensions to the study of literary Los Angeles in his *Tycoons and Locusts*.

Finally, today there are a number of American writers living in Los Angeles who feel an obligation neither to boost Los Angeles nor to criticize it, but simply to live here and write. Where Robert Nathan, Thomas Pynchon, Jascha Kessler, Daryl Ponicsan, and Michael Blankfort live, literature must be alive.

—Jay Martin



wall of the Coronel Adobe on Sanchez Street was riddled by bullets and splattered by blood.

The orgy took the lives of 19 Chinese. A jury convicted nine white vigilantes, and Judge Sepulveda imposed jail terms on them, but all were released on a technicality within a year. The Chinese government lodged an official protest about this incident and Congress drafted a bill to indemnify the survivors; it never passed.

By 1871, obscure in the shadow of glamorous San Francisco, Los Angeles was barely perceived by the outside world except for occurrences like the "Chinese massacre." It was still referred to as the "City of Fallen Angels" or "Queen of the Cow Counties." But modernization was on its way and with it came a different image. The change resulted not from chance but from a series of conscious decisions made by men involved in transportation, harbor construction, water development, and boosterism. Together they would lift Los Angeles to the status of a metropolis.

As the rancheros continued to lose ground, the city fell more and more into the hands of these merchants, bankers, professionals, and entrepreneurs. They were the new visionaries — eastern go-getters who brought to Los Angeles expansive plans for building fortunes from farming, commerce and the professions. Some even brought the necessary capital to invest in their enterprises. They exemplified the drive for profits, the elimination of risk, the belief in efficiency and private enterprise and the capitalist mode of production. They were not ashamed to call themselves "capitalists;" in the U.S. census of 1880, even Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California now turned real estate developer and living in genteel poverty, gave as his occupation, "capitalist."

Among those who would make their mark in Los Angeles were: General Phineas Banning, developer of the harbor at Wilmington and creator of the stage line and rail line linking the harbor and the pueblo; John G. Downey, banker, land developer and eventually governor of the state; H. K. S. O'Melveny, founder of the town's most prominent law firm; John P. Jones, the Comstock millionaire and original developer of Santa Monica, as well as senator from Nevada; Isaias W. Hellman, merchant and founder of the first chartered bank in Los Angeles; Prudent Beaudry, merchant and land developer; and Colonel Harrison Gray Otis, founder of the Los Angeles *Times* dynasty and town booster. These men would shape the town in their own images.

A constant preoccupation of the leading new Angelenos in the 1860s and 1870s was how to bring a transcontinental railroad to Southern California. It was axiomatic among them that the town's commercial and cultural progress, and therefore their own progress, depended on iron rails to overcome the distances that separated them from the centers of national life.

Happily, the builders of the Central Pacific Railroad planned to tap the southern part of the state once they completed the main line into San Francisco Bay in 1869. The Big Four — Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, Collis P. Huntington, and Mark Hopkins — intended to protect their interests along San Francisco Bay by undermining the potentialities of San Diego. Crocker once admitted, "We would blot [San Diego] . . . out of existence if we could." Since competition from the City of Los Angeles did not worry them, they

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*"One recoiled from the evidences of planlessness, the unimaginative economic greed, the idiot excitement of mere bigness, the strange shapeless ugliness. . . ."*

Mary Austin, c. 1888

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avored bisecting the County of Los Angeles with the tracks of their new subsidiary, the Southern Pacific Railroad, and connecting up with the Texas Pacific at Yuma. The exact route they left open to negotiation. Like all western railroad barons, the SP owners were heavyhanded in their treatment of towns in their jurisdiction. They demanded that Los Angeles ante up \$610,000 as a subsidy for bringing their rails into town, as well as 60 acres of land for yards and terminals, and a controlling interest in an existing short line running down to San Pedro. Unless they received these benefits, they threatened to make Spadra, an obscure spot near Pomona, the major southern railhead.

For a year balky Los Angeles businessmen tried to elude the grasp of "The Octopus." They sought alternatives, including the possibility of hooking up with a rail line to San Diego which would then swing east and connect with a transcontinental line. The plan never materialized. In 1872 Angelinos found themselves voting on a referendum on whether to accept or reject the SP's offer. The proposal was approved narrowly, and construction began shortly afterward from Los Angeles through the San Fernando Valley. It took the dynamite crew four years to blast its way through the Tehachapi Mountains, but on September 6, 1876, in Soledad Canyon, SP President Charles Crocker wielded the hammer that drove the ceremonial spike completing the rail hookup to the north.

The Southern Pacific proved an invaluable asset to Los Angeles. To an incalculable extent it spurred tourism, settlement, industry, commerce, and agriculture, and new tax revenues easily offset the original \$610,000 paid by taxpayers. The rails pierced the high-walled mountains and forbidding deserts that had made Southern California "an island on the land." The railroad also bestowed on the city its peculiarly decentralized design. When the SP rail network was completed, the tracks ran out as spokes from a hub, southward to Wilmington and San Pedro; northward through the San Fernando Valley; southeast toward Anaheim; west to Santa Monica; and eastward to San Bernardino. Spurs from these main lines were added later as Los Angeles became, in Fogelson's phrase, the "fragmented metropolis." Future freeways would carry autos along these routes created by the railroads.

The anticipated completion of the railroad triggered a land boomlet in the 1870s. Pasadena, Pomona, and Santa Monica were founded and population in Los Angeles County went from some 15,000 in 1870 to 34,000 in 1880. Horse-drawn carlines appeared on the city's streets. Considerable funds were spent on new commercial buildings and newspapers; churches and a high school were started.

Although urbanism was gaining ground, agriculture remained the major growth industry in the basin. "No happier paradise for the farmer can be found than Los Angeles County," wrote the Austrian visitor Ludwig Salvador in 1878. Nor was this mere boosterism. More people were involved in farming in the 1870s than in any other occupation. The rancho subdivided land was turned to diversified agriculture. Grapes, chickens (one hundred million eggs were marketed here in 1869), sheep, dairy cattle, fruit, and a variety of row crops were raised and sold profitably in the local and regional markets.

The key to success was the combination of sunshine and irrigation, which allowed for intensive agriculture on smaller plots than in the East. The incoming Midwesterners adapted well to the new style of farming, so that Los

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*"Los Angeles people do not carry arms. Indians are a curiosity, the gee string is not a common article of apparel here, and Los Angeles has three good hotels, twenty seven churches, and 350 telephone subscribers."*

*Los Angeles Times, 1883*

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Angeles was well on its way to becoming one of the major agricultural counties in the nation, a distinction it would hold through the first third of the twentieth century.

The pastoral landscape charmed both residents and visitors. Salvador's travel account, *Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies*, painted an idyllic picture of flowering gardens, fragrant orchards, and handsome mountain vistas, all blessed by clean and healthy air. Among Salvador's most pleasant memories were horseback outings in the canyons, wagon rides to the Santa Monica seashore, birdhunting in the marshlands (at what would later become Venice), and year-round agricultural enterprises.

So it was in the 1870s that Angelinos awoke and discovered their climate, or, rather, had it pointed out to them by astute travel writers. Charles Nordhoff and Ben C. Truman and others likened Southern California to Greece, Italy, Palestine, and other Mediterranean lands. Here, in the "semi-tropical" part of the state, they wrote, was a glorious climate for growing nearly every known crop with a minimum outlay of land, labor or capital. Here was an outdoors environment where, all year around, people could climb mountains, bask at the seashore, or explore the desert — without encountering the dangerous sleet or paralyzing snowstorms that plagued the Midwest and East. Even the insects (with the notable exception of fleas) seemed more benign than elsewhere. Here gentle nature served to cure every illness from tuberculosis to constipation, from melancholia to cancer. "Diseases of the bowels are practically unknown," Charles Dudley Warner wrote, "children cut teeth here without trouble; and disorders of the liver and kidneys are rare." Overnight Los Angeles climate became a saleable item, along with land. Hucksters grew fond of saying, "We sold them the climate and threw in the land free."

At the end of the 1870s it seemed that Los Angeles might possibly evolve into a mid-sized city.

The next decade brought significant demographic and cultural changes. By 1880 the Mexican American population slipped to 19% of the 11,183 total as the Midwestern Anglo culture sank deeper roots. Around 1880 a prominent Angelino referred to Los Angeles as a collection of "good Templars from Sedalia; Honest Spinsters from Grundy Center . . . the middle-aged from the middle-class of the middle-West." Yes, in a few short years the city's image had changed from a fallen angel to that of a Sunday school teacher. Protestant evangelicals could now missionize Los Angeles successfully. At a time when preachers likened most American cities to Sodom and Gomorrah, Los Angeles was now the model city of the nation. The lead article in the *Los Angeles Times* commemorative centennial edition of 1888 noted that it was "rapidly developing into a highly moral town" and dubbed it "The City of Churches." Some 40 percent of Angelinos belonged to churches, a very high proportion of membership compared to other cities. The pillars of the leading churches were the same merchants, farmers, orchardists, and professionals who had assumed control of the local economy and government.

The leading evangelical congregations — Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, and Congregational — formed a united front to exercise cultural stewardship over Southern California. They fought public gambling, drinking, dancing, and Sabbath-breaking, as well as other amusements considered

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*"At the Rosedale Cemetery there is the only crematory in the United States west of the Rocky Mountains . . . The first incineration took place June, 1887 . . . The cremation was a complete success and attracted as much attention as the most sanguine friend of the movement could have wished."*

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Walter Lidley, M.D., 1888





quite harmless in most urban places, including exuberant San Francisco.

Cities of the Industrial Revolution were propelled through the time warp of the nineteenth century by the technology of coal and iron, steam and electricity. Southern California lacked coal but it did have oil. Petroleum that oozed from rock formations and bubbled out of stream waters was the basis of the promising lamp-oil industry that emerged in the 1860s. By 1867 the first "oil boom" had played itself out, and some 70 companies collapsed. But when Edward Doheny dug a well near Second Street and Glendale Boulevard in the heart of the city in November, 1892, the local petroleum industry again hit its stride. Before long the downtown hillsides were forested with wooden derricks that pumped out small fortunes for local refiners. In some instances oil gushed and flowed out of control. Echo Park Lake, flanked by numerous wells, once caught fire and burned for three days.

Los Angeles was not noted for major factory development until well into the twentieth century, but some light industry had developed toward the end of the century. By 1880 there were 172 industrial establishments employing over 700 workers, a marked increase from 1850 when the town had supported one lonely factory, a bakery, with two employees.

The age of electricity was ushered into Los Angeles in 1882 when Mayor Toberman threw a switch that lighted up lamps affixed to seven tall masts in the downtown area, and their glow was bright enough to provide a landmark for sailors miles off shore. Despite objections from the gas company, and from skeptics who feared that the artificial light would cause blindness or damage

*A rate war between Southern Pacific and Santa Fe brought trainloads of visitors (and many stayers) to the Promised Land for a pittance during the boom of the 1880s.*

*What to do on a Sunday afternoon following the  
Midwestern Protestant clean-up of the 1880s?  
Angelinos were up to their eyeballs in alligator farms.*



skin complexions, electricity came to stay. The imaginative entrepreneur who sold the city on this form of lighting was F. Howland, a man who also introduced the first electric streetcar to Los Angeles in 1886. Though electric streetcars and interurban car lines were to have tremendous impact in a few short years, Howland died a poor man.

Los Angeles' celebrated climate was now a major attraction for those east of the Rockies who flocked to Southern California to save their health, invest their money, and enjoy the good life. From the 1880s on the health-seekers formed a substantial part of the population. They hobbled in from all direc-



tions and in their wake came hosts of doctors, dentists, faith healers, and medical quacks, aspiring both to serve and to exploit the invalids. Newspapers periodically reported that the flow of health-seekers was overtaxing the hotels, clinics, sanatoria, and cemeteries.

In 1887 Los Angeles was the scene of the largest land boom in American history, the result of a ticket war between the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe railroads. The objective was to lure tourists and settlers from the Midwest who would buy town land. Beginning in 1886 when the Santa Fe first entered Los Angeles, the two rail giants repeatedly lowered their fares — until a one-way ride from the Missouri River to Los Angeles cost only twelve dollars. A flood of eager visitors and settlers arrived in the summer months of 1887. Each day two or more passenger trains deposited carloads of human cargo in Los Angeles and the population burgeoned from 11,000 in 1880 to 50,000 by 1890. A city directory published one month was completely outdated the next.

Aggressive developers continued to divide the ranchos into townsites and the townsites into town lots, some of which were sold and resold several times a day. Brass bands, colorful brochures, and free barbecues enticed buyers to attend land auctions in the hinterlands with the excitement rubbing off on places as far south as San Diego and as far north as Pismo Beach. Land values in downtown Los Angeles leaped from about \$700 to \$2,000 per front-foot. During the summer of 1887 \$200 million worth of real estate changed hands, creating a number of "millionaires-of-a-day." In all, one hundred towns were platted on the map from 1884 to 1889, among them Inglewood, Palms, and Playa del Rey. Even such existing towns as Santa Monica, Redondo Beach, Long Beach, Pasadena, Monrovia, San Bernardino, and Burbank prospered as never before.

Cultural institutions duly multiplied. The University of Southern California, Chaffee College, Throop College, Immaculate Heart College, Occidental College, State Normal School (later to become UCLA), Whittier College, and the forerunner to Loyola University, were all founded during the boom of the 1880s.

That the boom would sputter and die was inevitable, since so much of it was inflated with hot air. "I had half a million dollars wiped out in the crash," one participant allegedly complained, "and what's worse, \$500 of it was cash." Left behind were as many as 62 undeveloped town sites — and thousands of empty house lots with brightly colored surveyor flags still fluttering in the breeze. Gone completely, or never really there to begin with, were La Ballona, Sunset (Westwood), Morocco (Beverly Hills), Rosecrans, Ivanhoe, and Carlton. (Carlton developers had surveyed 4,060 lots, but had not enticed a single human being to take up residence there.)

Some of the millionaires-of-a-day left town penniless, but not without having left their mark. Several new communities outlasted the frenzy, including Glendale, Alhambra, and Azusa, and the boom-inspired schools, colleges, utilities, sidewalks, roads, and transportation systems amounted to permanent assets. The banks also somehow survived.

The whole mania served to advertise Los Angeles to the next wave of settlers who, in a decade or so later, would carry the real estate flags even farther afield and plant them more firmly. This was but the first of a series of land booms in the history of Los Angeles.

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*"Los Angeles is overrun  
with militant moralists,  
connoisseurs of sin, ex-  
perts of biological purity."*

Willard Huntington Wright,  
1913

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## the genie of Yang-Na

Among history's seductive definitions is that which holds it to be the story down the ages of mankind's control of energy. Definition becomes reality in the evolution of Los Angeles from the Gabrielino village of Yang-Na into California's imperial city of today.

To say that Los Angeles suffered from energy anemia after its founding smacks of galloping understatement. It lacked the energy of falling water for hydropower; its timber resources were adequate only to the needs of a low density pastoral and agricultural society; it had no coal (though neither did the rest of the state). Nevertheless, ship cargoes of coal from all the world could be purchased on San Francisco's wharves — that city's dooryard — for \$4 or \$5 per ton. This same coal, sweated up from the hazardous anchorage-called-harbor at San Pedro was far more costly, even after a pretentious little railroad linked port and pueblo. Down the decades after 1781, Angelinos went their ways without capitalizing on the ocean of energy beneath their feet — petroleum and its energy sibling, natural gas, the cleanest most flexible, utilitarian form of energy known to date.

Black gold's first "boomlet" swept the state in the Civil War years and today's Chevron and Union 76 service stations trace their California ancestry from pioneer producers in the Newhall Basin and Ventura County, respectively. By 1876, the state's annual production was 18,000 barrels from these two sources and it found its market in San Francisco. Production increased steadily over the next fifteen years, but it grew only to meet increased demand in northern California, a demand which increased with glacial rapidity for several reasons.

The heavy, "sour" California crude was a refiner's nightmare and hazardous to boot. Kerosene was *the* money product then and that refined from California crude was odorous and explosive. Petroleum's basic use was as fuel oil, often mixed with the unsaleable kerosene to reduce viscosity and increase flammability. This use was hindered by the lack of an effi-

cient burner and it was hampered even more by the animosity of fire insurance companies which viewed fuel oil with all the enthusiasm reserved by the Devil for a fundamentalist preacher. By 1891, the state was producing some 320,000 barrels per year — and then crude went over the crown block, so to speak.

In November, 1892, a weather-worn rainbow-chaser from the mines of New Mexico sank a shaft near the intersection of west Second Street and Glendale Boulevard. At 500 feet he and his partners got seven barrels a day, not bad by California standards, and E.L. Doheny's fortune and the Los Angeles City Field were born. So was interest in oil company stocks that became "a charnel house of speculation" and climaxed with the Julian Petroleum scandal of the 1920s.

By 1894, west Second Street was a greasy, raucous, oil-soaked gulch where wells were "thick as holes in a pepper pot" and caused nearby residents to implore the state's Attorney General to abate the nuisances of air and noise pollution, including profanity, and the ever-present menace of explosive fires. By 1895 the L.A. City Field was producing *more oil per year* than the entire state had produced in 1894, three times more than the state's total production for 1892.

This glut drove the price of crude at the wellhead from \$1.25 to 29 cents per barrel. The energy equivalent of one ton of coal could be had from 4½ barrels of oil and these barrels now cost only \$1.31 instead of \$5-to-\$10 for their coal equivalent. The savings were so obvious that the Santa Fe Railway began using oil to fire its engines over Cajón Pass by 1894, illustrating the exponential increase in demand that accompanied the drop in crude prices. Demand in turn stimulated more production, stepped-up research and development in refining and drilling technology, and increased exploration to find new fields, of which Los Angeles was found to possess some of the largest and most productive in the state.

Gasoline became valuable for more than paint thinner, its previous major use; asphalt was used to pave

Venice oil field on Pacific Avenue, 1930



roads that hitherto had been “impassable, not even jackassable” in wet weather; the Big Red Cars used oil-generated electricity to outline the city’s sprawl and the *infernal* combustion engine filled it in; the “grey iron” industry at Vernon was sired out of cheap energy by demand for heavy industrial products, and the “irrigated harbor” of San Pedro grew into the largest tonnage-handling complex on the West Coast because of oil fuel and cargoes.

Other industries came apace — aircraft, motion pictures, automobile assembly plants, tire baking fac-

tories — and they in turn spawned service industries. All these provided jobs or the hope of jobs needed by the multiplied thousands that streamed lemming-like into Los Angeles in search of a better life on the golden shore by the sundown sea, and boosted its population from 50,400 in 1890 to 319,000 in just twenty years. The city’s Aladdin’s Lamp was found on west Second Street and the genie that came out of it was the fossil fuel laid down long before the dire wolf roamed Wilshire Boulevard and the La Brea Tar Pits entrapped it.

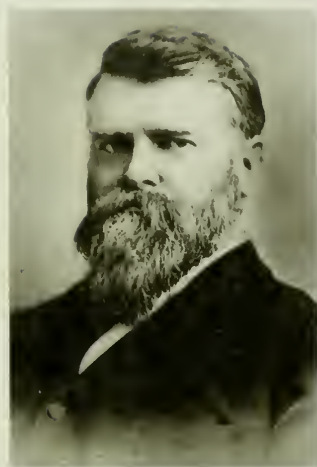
— W. H. Hutchinson



The presence of the railroad was undoubtedly the most important single accomplishment of the Los Angeles boomers, for it made the town the hub of the entire Southern California region and gave it an eastern outlet for local products, while assuring its ascendancy over its closest natural rival, San Diego. But without a deep-channel harbor to accommodate major steam vessels, the railroad was an incomplete advantage and Los Angeles figured to remain forever subservient to San Francisco. When it came to a harbor, nature had dealt the city a bad hand; Los Angeles was entirely landlocked and the best existing harbors on its fringes were none too good.

The busiest and oldest port facility was at San Pedro. Even there incoming ships had to contend with wind, tide, and mud; shipping was handled by lighters, small shuttle boats which struggled back and forth through the mud flats to ships standing in deep water. The next best landing was at Santa Monica, which stood exposed to wind and tide. Redondo Beach, Portuguese Bend, and Playa del Rey also were mentioned as deserving of development, but were never serious contenders to serve the city's maritime needs. Any future harbor development required needed money and political clout. The major problem stemmed from the fact that the Southern Pacific Railroad controlled Santa Monica with an iron grip and decided to develop a port in that town for its own exclusive use — and to oppose all other harbor development in the county. The Southern Pacific feared that a major harbor installation at San Pedro would open the way for railroads like the Santa Fe to break its near-monopoly grip on California transportation. With Huntington himself buttonholing congressmen in Washington, the SP did what it could to lobby against the use of federal funds for the development of San Pedro. At the same time, the Los Angeles mercantile community put its weight behind the creation of a "free harbor" at San Pedro. It organized a powerful chamber of commerce which was ably led by Charles Dwight Willard, and had the backing of U.S. Senator Stephen White who argued vigorously for federal appropriations. A bitter struggle bounced back and forth from city hall to the halls of Congress between 1893 to 1896, before Congress finally voted funds to build a huge breakwater and to dredge the harbor at Wilmington and San Pedro. To celebrate its triumph Los Angeles organized a "Free Harbor Jubilee" that was attended by 20,000 people. The harbor would eventually put Los Angeles on the map of world commerce, and turn its eyes from the east whence its citizens came, to the Pacific where its future lay.

Boosterism had by now become a fine art in Los Angeles, and for some even a way of life. One cannot overestimate the importance of the public relations industry. In 1890, after the population growth had slumped somewhat, the charismatic *Times* publisher, Colonel Otis, suggested that the business community reestablish the Chamber of Commerce and work with the SP to spread the gospel of Southern California to the rest of the nation. After careful consideration they targeted the snowbound heartland as the best market in which to peddle the glories of climate. They saturated the region with millions of books, brochures, pamphlets, and special newspaper editions. The Chamber of Commerce even created a popular travelling display known as "California on Wheels" and installed a colorful exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 that featured "Oranges for Health and Wealth." By 1900 they could boast that one out of every five adults in the U.S. had seen



*"Free harbor" hero Stephen M. White bested Collis P. Huntington's agents in U.S. Senate debate, and the city's gate to the Orient went to San Pedro, not Santa Monica.*





some form of Los Angeles propaganda. The payoff of this new PR campaign was that the town again doubled its population within a decade, going from 50,000 in 1890 to more than 102,000 in 1900.

Los Angeles was now a mid-sized city and well on its way toward becoming a world metropolis. Harris Newmark, who had witnessed the transformation from pueblo to mini-metropolis, had this to say in 1913 about the miraculous change: "When I came [in 1853], Los Angeles was a sleepy, ambitionless adobe village with very little promise for the future . . . Time has more than realized the fantasies of those village oracles, and what they said would someday come to pass in Los Angeles, has come and gone, to be succeeded by things much greater still."

How many of the nation's restless actually fulfilled their dreams of wealth and health in Los Angeles will never be known, but there is evidence to show that among native-born and foreign-born whites who arrived between 1880 and 1890, many bettered their lot. Few of them went from rags-to-riches according to the gospel of Horatio Alger, but according to recent quantitative studies of social mobility, more of them moved up the occupational ladder than in eastern cities of comparable size. Ironically, those who did climb the ladder did so in part because of the presence of the Chinese and the Mexicans, who were available for menial labor at the bottom rungs.

As America had become the promised land for so many Europeans, so Los Angeles had become a promised land for Americans. In this sense, at least, it had become prototypical. To paraphrase Carey McWilliams, what America was, Los Angeles was, with accents, in italics.

*The city's first barrio, Sonora Town, formed north of the Plaza. This adobe island in a sea of wood-frame houses was settled by Gold Rush veterans.*

*The "most wonderful railway in the world" whisked Angelinos to the top of Mount Lowe and Ye Alpine Tavern for suitable refreshments. No tourist's stay was complete without a trip to the mile-high summit.*



# The Laboratory of Marvels

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AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY 35 AMERICAN CITIES, INCLUDING FALL River, Massachusetts, and Providence, Rhode Island, exceeded Los Angeles' population of 102,472. Fifty years later, with a census headcount of 1,957,692, Los Angeles was the country's fourth largest city (the *New York Times* ranked it third). It had covered some 450 square miles of the richest agricultural county in the United States with freeways, factories, oil refineries, subdivisions, shopping centers and motion picture studios, while setting the world's tongues to wagging with the antics of its film stars, evangelists, crooks, cranks and crusaders. As a noxious pall settled over Southern California's bumper-to-bumper traffic at mid-century, the upstart cowtown had become a universal metaphor for the afflictions of the modern metropolis.

"The change from an easy, pleasant place to live has come on us suddenly, amazingly," the *Los Angeles Times* noted in the late 1940s, and the booster spirit of Harrison Gray Otis, who had used the paper to build a God-fearing, open-shop city, must have stirred uneasily in his Hollywood Cemetery tomb when a Republican mayor suggested, "The good Lord didn't intend this to be an industrial city."

Back when the nineteenth century drew to a close, it was obvious to the editors of the *Times* that "Otistown," as trade unionists called it, was "destined to become one of the great cities of the country." Once isolated by mountains, deserts and the sea, the city was now linked to the Atlantic Seaboard by three railroad lines and, when the Panama Canal opened in 1914, Boston, New York, Philadelphia and New Orleans were several thousand sea miles closer to the deep-water harbor the federal government dredged at San Pedro.

"The southwestern region of the United States will support at least one great city, and all doubt as to where that city will be located is now at an end,"



a local historian wrote in the summer of 1901, when a new generation of tourists and immigrants, born to a world of telephones, electric lights, phonographs and horseless carriages, was moving west across the Rockies and the Mojave in Pullman Palace Cars.

"People of today take the railways for granted as they take sea and sky," wrote H.G. Wells, a prophetic Englishman who looked forward to the not-distant day when travelers would be tooling about the countryside in privately owned motor carriages. "One will be free to dine where one chooses, hurry when one chooses, travel asleep or awake, stop and pick flowers."

In a sobering discussion of the changing nature of war in the new century, Wells predicted that "long before the year A.D. 2000, and very probably before 1950, a successful aeroplane will have soared and come home safe and sound." He envisioned aerial warfare as "a fight of hawks" which would enable the victor to "mark all his adversary's roads and communications, and sweep them with sudden incredible disasters of shot and shell." The moral effect of such devastation, he added, would be "enormous."

Looking back on a century of human endeavor, *Scientific American* observed that never had "the work of man been so built into tangible and enduring things of a useful quality as the century just about to pass into history." The editors of the *Times*, after pointing out that "in material achievement it has surpassed every century that has preceded it," went on to wonder whether the achievements of the new century might not be even "greater and grander."

A reporter's roundup of proposals designed to get the twentieth century off to a good start included a housewife's hope that something be done about golf (a craze which threatened to leave the city's families without a father during daylight hours), and a book-lover's desire to see the public library, with its 60,000 volumes, moved from City Hall to "a home of its own." The coroner, mindful perhaps of the 100,000 barrels of oil Angelinos were emptying every month, contributed a grim warning: "We should quit our waste of fuel and hunt for some substitute for coal, wood and oil, which are going to give out."

Los Angeles, at the start of the new century, was producing nearly one-third of the state's annual total of 8,000,000 barrels of oil. The value of California's petroleum products, the industry was saying, would turn out to be greater than the wealth taken from the state's gold mines, but within three years a glutted market had forced the price down from \$1.80 a barrel to fifteen cents. A more dramatic and durable oil boom was soon to be touched off by local sportsmen tinkering with horseless carriages.

"The facilities for travel are the means and at the same time the measure of the world's civilization," a transportation historian, aptly named J.G. Speed, wrote in *Harper's Weekly*, January 12, 1901.

Civilized man rode into the nineteenth century in horse-drawn carriages and left it in electric trolley cars which, in most cities, slowed to crawls in rush-hour traffic. While New York, London and Paris sought to relieve congestion with underground railway systems, Angelinos and their out-of-town guests were nipping about on a 175-mile network of street railways that could take them twenty miles for a nickel. "The city is one of the best supplied in the world with the means of rapid transit," the *Times* boasted on New Year's Day, 1901. "Electric cars run every five to fifteen minutes to every part of the city."

Henry James, who dropped by on a 1905 lecture tour, was impressed by



William Mulholland, the city's water superintendent, was credited with the greening of Los Angeles and the browning of Owens Valley.

Only yesterday (or, more exactly, 1920) Wilshire and Fairfax crossed uncluttered ground, save for Syd (Charlie's brother) Chaplin's Airport, some oil derricks and haystacks.



"those big electric trams that run furiously up and down your streets by day and night." He had been around a bit, he told a reporter who caught up with him at the Van Nuys Hotel, "but I never saw such street transportation in all my travels."

Five years later the *Times* was complaining about congestion in the center of the city, all the way from Temple Street south to Eighth. "Machines must be taken from the streets," the editors declared, "as they are now crowding the traffic of the thoroughfares. The heavy teams have been removed, now it is up to the council to keep the automobiles moving. With thousands of motor cars passing and repassing, the traffic question has become a problem."

For years Angelinos had been taking visitors to the top of Mount Lowe, where, in the words of a 1905 *Traveler's Handbook to Southern California*, "the





*The water arrives.  
On November 5, 1913,  
some 20,000 people gathered  
in San Fernando to greet the  
water brought 250 miles by  
aqueduct from the Owens  
Valley.*

most wonderful railway in the world” whisked them up to Ye Alpine Tavern, some 5,000 feet above sea level. Venturesome travelers then ascended to the summit by foot or on the back of a pony. When a reporter made the ascent one calm day in the summer of 1912, he observed that “the effect of Los Angeles smoke on the surrounding pellucid air is evident and apparent as a gray-brown veil hanging over the city.”

Southern California reminded Henry James of England “on a vaster scale.” He could not imagine what would become of the place “when water runs over it, when irrigation touches everything.” A few months after his visit, William Mulholland, superintendent of the city’s water department, and his friend, Fred Eaton, a fellow engineer and a former mayor of Los Angeles, wound up their last land-buying expedition to Inyo County, where they were quietly preparing to divert the melted snow of the eastern Sierra Nevada slope from the farms of Owens Valley ranchers to the faucets of Los Angeles kitchens.

A proposed 240-mile aqueduct would slake the thirst of 2,000,000 Angelinos. It would also boost the value of real estate in the San Fernando Valley, where a parcel of influential speculators, including General Otis and his son-in-law, Harry Chandler, had acquired 47,500 acres. The syndicate knew about the Owens Valley scheme because one of its members, General Moses H. Sherman, served on the city’s Board of Water Commissioners.

General Sherman (the title derived from service in state militia) and his



brother-in-law, Eli Clark, pioneered the interurban railway system which had so delighted Henry James. After linking Los Angeles and Pasadena in 1895, they started laying tracks toward the ocean front at Santa Monica, giving rise to local jokes about "Sherman's March to the Sea." The trolley cars helped push the resort's population up from 1,580 in 1890 to 3,058 in 1900.

"Southern California is on the eve of the greatest development it has ever seen," Frank Wiggins, manager of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, said in February, 1901. Henry Edwards Huntington had just sold his Southern Pacific stock to E.H. Harriman, preparatory to moving from San Francisco, where he had reorganized the city's rapid transit system, to Los Angeles. Here the steam railroads, which had dominated the state in the latter years of the nineteenth century, would come up against his well-organized electric interurban network designed to shape the new century's "City of Southern California." "We will join this whole region into one big family," Huntington was quoted as saying, and he went on to express his belief that Los Angeles was "destined to become the most important city in the country, if not in the world. It can extend in any direction as far as you like."

He drew on his own fortune (he had something like \$30 million at his disposal) to reorganize and expand existing systems, as he had done in San Francisco with the Market Street Cable Railway. By 1910 Los Angeles' population had tripled (up to 319,198) and no Angelino dared turn a busy corner without preparing to dodge one of Mr. Huntington's trolley cars.

"The whole area within a radius of seventy miles of the city took on new life," Isaac Marcossou wrote in *A Little Known Master of Millions: The Story of Henry E. Huntington, Constructive Capitalist* (1914). "Villages became towns, towns blossomed into miniature cities."

The articles of incorporation for the Pacific Electric Railway Company, which absorbed the Los Angeles & Pasadena Railroad, were signed October 29, 1901. Unlike most trolley systems, including the Sherman and Clark Santa Monica line, the PE cars would run on standard gauge tracks, thus enabling them to interchange with the passenger and freight cars of steam railways. Huntington's challenge to the Southern Pacific involved a plan to move in on its new seaside route with a 115-mile PE line to be built up the coast to Santa Barbara.

"Los Angeles," noted the 1909 edition of *Baedeker's United States*, "is a busy centre for short trips, chiefly made now by electric cars, which are both more frequent and more accessible than the steam railways."

Huntington and Harriman got together in the spring of 1910 and worked out a deal which turned the 600-mile PE network over to the Southern Pacific. Huntington acquired full control of the narrow-gauge local streetcar system, the Los Angeles Railway Company. He also took possession of Pacific Power & Light.

"The Pacific Electric shortly began to show operating losses, while the Los Angeles Railway recorded profits for many years," Spencer Crump writes in *Ride the Big Red Cars* (1965). "The power company was on the eve of America's great swing to the use of more electrical power. At the time, however, the automobile was not regarded as a serious threat to rail transportation and Southern Pacific officials undoubtedly expected great profits from the new interurban system as Southern California grew."

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*"I don't want to live here, but a stay rather amuses me. It's sort of crazy sensible. Just the moment; hardly as far ahead as carpe diem."*

D. H. Lawrence, 1923

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*Years of tension between management and labor literally exploded on October 1, 1910, when the unionist McNamara brothers dynamited the Los Angeles Times building, killing twenty men.*



The city's first gasoline-powered tallyho rattled past mule teams on Main Street in the spring of 1897, a year after the first interurban trolley cars reached Santa Monica. Ten years later no mention was made of the automobile when the Governor of California called on the legislature to provide good roads because of the savings they would effect "in horse flesh, harness wagons, time and draught power."

By 1909, however, when Angelinos held their second annual automobile show, they boasted of having more cars per capita on their streets than any other city in the world. Enthusiasts spoke of the day when "auto trucks will successfully compete with steam roads" in moving goods to and from the new harbor. The port communities, San Pedro and Wilmington, were joined to Los Angeles by consolidation that summer, giving the inland city a shoe-string corridor to the sea which enabled it to challenge (and eventually to surpass) the great natural harbors at San Francisco and San Diego.

To top off their technological mastery of land and sea, Angelinos began to look skyward. In the fall of 1909, just six years after the Wright brothers had managed a 59-second flight 852 feet above the sand hills of the North Carolina coast, the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association was passing the hat for contributions to the country's first international air meet. "Los Angeles should

not lose this opportunity to be the focus of the world's attention and the scene of a history-making competition," the *Times* reminded its readers, and Henry Huntington chipped in \$50,000 for the meet, which prompted an editorial comment, "If the airship is destined to put the railroads and trolley cars out of business, it doesn't seem to worry Mr. Huntington."

On January 10, 1910, some 20,000 men, women and children turned up at Aviation Field on the old Dominguez Ranch to watch Glenn Curtiss take off in a biplane on the West's second powered flight (the first had occurred the day before when Curtiss tested one of his airplanes).

"It was a day that will never be forgotten in Southern California," the *Times* declared, and its reporter was hard-pressed to find words for what he had just seen. "It is almost like the sensations of a dream," he wrote. "You feel an exhilaration that lifts you out of yourself. One is so accustomed to see and hear the strain and tug of the trolley car and the wagon that this seems almost unearthly."

Louis Paulhan, a cocky young French mechanic, set a world altitude record (4,165 feet) and upstaged the other fliers with maneuvers that reminded one observer of "a facetious falcon," but Curtiss managed to capture the speed record (55 miles per hour). By the end of the week, the *Times* reported, some half a million PE passengers had ridden out to Aviation Field to see "nineteenth century miracles become the popular sport of the twentieth century." In all likelihood, the editors noted, the airship could "never be used commercially," but "its war possibilities are the puzzle and dread of every civilized army."

Los Angeles, on the eve of the great European war, was described by a supercilious Frenchman, Jules Huret, as "one of the few really beautiful cities in the United States." Baedeker called it "a crowded and lively town of wide streets and spacious sidewalks, with an extensive residential quarter."

"Have you no slum districts?" President Taft asked on an October, 1909, visit, and some years later a writer in *Sunset Magazine* (March, 1916) told how the head of a family could buy a suburban home for \$25 a month and commute to his job on the big red and yellow trolley cars. "Go north," the article continued, "go south, go east, go west, or to any point between, on both urban and interurban lines, and just inside the city limits or outside up to the ten-cent limit, you will find climbing the hillsides, slipping along the valleys, stretching across the plain until they join fields still planted in grain, street after street of cozy homes — miles and miles of homes for one man and his family. These are the tenements of Los Angeles . . ."

The city reminded its Municipal Art Commission of a child who had outgrown his clothes. "The old garments are uncomfortably filled, crowding and cramping him, and beyond them he stretches out in long, sprawling legs and arms." Interurban tracks ran seventeen miles from downtown Los Angeles to the ocean front at Santa Monica, passing through Hollywood ("a suburb of charming homes," said Baedeker). The new Second Street tunnel had lopped ten minutes from the seven-mile ride from Third and Broadway to the stately homes of Hollywood.

That sober, church-going subdivision laid out in the 1880s by a Methodist teetotaler from Kansas had been incorporated in 1903. Two years later the *Times* pointed out that "business of an objectionable character has been dis-



*Henry E. Huntington left his name on Huntington Park, Huntington Beach and the Huntington Library and Art Gallery.*



## a sky-minded city

In 1910 Los Angeles hosted its justly famous Dominguez Hills international air meet, only the second such aerial congregation the world had witnessed, and the first ever in the United States. Glenn Curtiss opened with what has generally been held to be the first heavier-than-air flight on the West Coast. The color and success of Dominguez Hills set the tone for Los Angeles' long fascination (and success!) with flight.

Another hero of that eventful show, Glenn Martin, may even have, in early experimentation, preceded Curtiss into California skies. More certain is Martin's claim to be godfather of the prodigious Los Angeles aviation industry. About 1909 Martin, an automobile mechanic, became fascinated with flight. He built a Wright Brothers-style plane and, despite poor eyesight, taught himself to fly. After Dominguez Hills Martin began manufacturing planes, first in Santa Ana and later in downtown Los Angeles. A gifted designer, his success attracted (and Martin was wise in employing as assistants) men, chiefly Donald Douglas, who would one day prove the backbone of the industry.

In 1915 Douglas came to Los Angeles and joined Martin. He was there as the company strained to meet the demands of World War I during which Martin managed the imposing production total of one plane a day. In the early 1920s Douglas, with cash resources of less than \$1000, began his own operation with offices in the back of a barber shop.

In that decade aviation spiced the Los Angeles scene. National events, the flights of Lindbergh and Earhart, had been planned in and were reflections of the creative spark of Los Angeles aeronautics. Aerial derring-do could be witnessed at half a dozen airports, including Cecil B. DeMille's at Wilshire and Fairfax, just across the street from one operated by Syd Chaplin, brother to Charlie. The nascent movie industry's interest was reflected in front of the cameras as well in a spate of epics celebrating the war-time air corps. Goodyear operated its first, small "pony" blimp in regular service to Catalina. Scheduled Los Angeles-

San Francisco flights began in 1920. And in 1926 Western Air Express, whose founders included Harry Chandler of the *Los Angeles Times*, flew the mail to Salt Lake City, then later passengers, thus initiating transcontinental service and becoming in time Western Airlines.

As exciting as all this was the aircraft industry produced a limited number of planes and employed few workers. In the over-all scheme of Los Angeles business the industry counted for little. But when Douglas wanted to expand he found support from such men as Harry Chandler. And this, ultimately, was one of the major reasons why aviation found its home here.

There was also, of course, the year-round, nearly perfect weather and a labor force weighted towards the skilled mechanics the early industry required. But as important, as Douglas had believed, was that faith in the potential of the unproved industry would work to make financing available. Douglas became well-established in the limited, peace-time military market.

The Depression damaged the fragile industry, but major breakthroughs, and some lucky breaks, pulled it through. First Lockheed, formed in 1913 and sold at receivership in the early 1920s, was revived when the company perfected its all-metal, twin-engined *Electra*. As important was that the plane's early testing happened to be conducted at the University of Michigan where a young student, Clarence "Kelly" Johnson, became involved. Offered a post with the company, he came west and in time became the design genius behind such planes as the P-38 fighter and the U-2 reconnaissance jet.

Los Angeles was further blessed when the owners of the Northrup Company decided to move to Kansas City and the company's young founder, John Northrup, elected to remain behind and form North American Aircraft.

And, finally, spurred by the Seattle-based Boeing Company's 247 transport, Donald Douglas built the DC-1, the prototype of the DC-3. The DC-3 com-

*Aviators Beecher and  
Kearney perform at  
Dominguez Field, 1912.  
Two years earlier Los  
Angeles hosted the world's  
second air meet and the first  
for the United States.*



pleted modern airframe development. This work horse was, according to one historian, "The first plane capable of supporting itself economically as well as aerodynamically." Within two years the DC-3 was carrying 95 percent of all American air traffic.

War in Europe meant boom for the Los Angeles aviation industry. Lockheed succeeded in five days in redesigning its Electra to meet the specifications of the British for a bomber; the company landed the biggest order in its history. Douglas, too, prospered.

Though huge backorders piled up, local manufacturers were advising, as late as 1940, when about 25,000 men were employed, that Southern California required no new workers. Within three years, with the U.S. at war, the work force swelled to almost 300,000 statewide and the "help wanted" sign remained out.

Despite Los Angeles' vulnerability to enemy attack, despite little engine and almost no propeller manufacturing capacity, it became obvious that the city was American aviation's once and future capital. For here were located the airframe manufacturing and assembly plants, which in increasingly sophisticated production diagrams assumed key importance. Somewhere in excess of 50,000 planes rolled off Southern

California's production lines. Douglas, in setting a company record in 1943, produced 96,446,000 pounds of combat planes valued at \$1,000,000,000 and still it had a backlog of \$3,000,000,000 in orders!

World War II ended as had World War I: with sudden, massive cancellations of military production. The industry floundered, in part experimenting with small, private aircraft for a segment of the industry which, for the moment, failed to live up to expectations. Then, in the early 1950s, new stimulus was felt with the Korean War and the decision of the world's airlines to replace propeller planes with jets.

As piston engines were retired, the industry confronted whole new unknowns in the complex problems of sophisticated jet and rocket systems. The change was eloquently symbolized in the reshuffling of the work force. Between the mid 1950s and the early 1960s industry employment changed from predominantly blue collar to white — the white of scientists and technicians. In effect, the old aeronautics industry had quietly ceased to exist and was replaced by something called aerospace, a usage which dates from this time. One thing had not changed, however: the industry's importance in the evolving Los Angeles economic landscape.

— Bruce Henstell

"America's Sweetheart"  
Mary Pickford wed dashing  
Douglas Fairbanks, and  
romantic love's royal pair  
settled down in Beverly  
Hills, which has outlasted  
the marriage.



couraged; the saloon and its kindred evils are unknown." Indeed, the editors had begun to cast a covetous eye on this prim neighbor, confident that annexation by Los Angeles was inevitable. "If the mother city is reaching out toward her daughter of the foothills," wrote one of General Otis' minnesingers, "so is the latter advancing to clasp hands. Each has her own peculiar gifts to bestow, the one her keen business enterprise, the other her sweet retreat from the moil and bustle of the world."

When Hollywood's population got up to 5,000 in 1909, the *Times* reported that its developers expected "to share in the benefits of the Los Angeles aqueduct," which would be completed in a few years. Annexation came in 1910, the year David Horsley, president of the Nestor Film Company of Staten Island, opened Hollywood's first motion picture studio in a padlocked roadhouse on the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Gower Street. (The place had been shut down by the city fathers' ban on the sale of intoxicating liquors.)

"Most moving pictures made in America are produced in Los Angeles," the *Times* announced, February 1, 1910, a few days after D.W. Griffith brought 16-year-old Mary Pickford to Southern California as a member of his Biograph stock company. She went unmentioned in *The Moving Picture World's* review of *Ramona* (she played an Indian girl), but before the year was out the editors devoted a full page to her ("an artiste of the highest rank in a field



where there are very few of her kind"). Six years later she signed a contract with Adolph Zukor's Famous Players which guaranteed her \$10,000 a week. Then she fell in love with Douglas Fairbanks.

Both were married at the time. But like a couple of high school sweethearts, they sneaked off to the brush-covered mountains above the beanfields of Beverly Hills and clung to each other in the privacy of a Model T Ford. The highly publicized love affair of America's professionally virginal sweetheart touched off lively outbursts in the pulpit and the press, threatening both careers, but divorces were arranged and on March 28, 1920, they were married in the Glendale home of a Baptist minister. Two months later they were mobbed by New York fans when they set sail for Europe.

"Thanks to the universality of the silent film," Booton Herndon writes in *Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks* (1977), "Doug and Mary were the worldwide epitome of romantic love, the modern fulfillment of every love story since Adam and Eve, the prince and the princess."

The royal pair returned to take up residence at Pickfair, as the press promptly dubbed their refurbished hunting lodge in Beverly Hills (population: 672). Kings, queens, statesmen, sports heroes and Nobel laureates made their way up Benedict Canyon to the Summit Drive sanctuary, where the table was set for fifteen every night. Mrs. Fairbanks never knew how many guests her ebullient husband would bring home or what practical jokes he might inflict on them. "At the dinner table," Herndon writes, "the most proper countess might find herself trying to eat with a flexible fork or sipping out of a dribble glass. An occasional squeal would reveal that the dinner-jacketed host had crawled under the table to bite, yes, *bite*, a shapely ankle. Miss Pickford, the hostess, seated as always at the head of the table, would give, as always, the expected reaction — 'Oh, Douglas!' — with a mixture of exasperation, tolerance and love."

Having seduced Hollywood with promises of Owens Valley water, Los Angeles set out to win over Beverly Hills, where property values soared when Pickfair attracted such glamorous neighbors as Charles Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, Rudolph Valentino, Tom Mix, Harold Lloyd and Will Rogers. But the stars banded together in 1923 to preserve the independence of their village. Annexation was rejected, leaving Beverly Hills a 5.6-square-mile enclave within the neighboring city's elastic borders.

In the summer of 1920, when the population of Los Angeles (575,480) forged ahead of San Francisco (508,410), a local businessman declared that "the real growth of the town has just begun." In a reprise of the boom of the 1880s, some 100,000 newcomers poured into the city every year between 1920 and 1924. They were immediately engulfed in real estate agents who, Will Rogers wisecracked, "are as thick as bootleggers."

"Ten thousand banks may close," according to a typical sales pitch of the period, "stocks may smash, bonds may shrink to little or nothing, but this tract and Los Angeles real estate stand like the Rock of Gibraltar for safety, certainty and profit. Don't be satisfied with six per cent on your money. Don't be satisfied with twelve per cent. Buy property like this and keep it, and as sure as the world moves it will pay you one hundred per cent to one thousand per cent and more per annum."

When he returned to Los Angeles after a two-year exile in New York,

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*"Here, if anywhere else  
in America, I seem to  
hear the coming footsteps  
of the muse."*

W. B. Yeats, c. 1925

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Harry Carr wrote in the *Times* in 1924 that he and his wife found their "little real estate holdings, representing all our savings, had just about quadrupled in value." He predicted that Southern California would become "the most densely populated section on the face of the globe," and took favorable note of the belief current in Theosophical circles that here, in this mixture of El Dorado and the Riviera, "a new race is being born into the world and that this remarkable adventure in immigration is part of the plan of the Lord of Heaven."

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*"Los Angeles represents  
the ultimate segregation of  
the unfit."*

Bertrand Russell

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The road to heaven in Jazz Age Los Angeles was charted by Sister Aimee Semple McPherson, a Baptist evangelist who mingled sex and salvation in her theatrical Bible lessons, and by the Reverend Robert Shuler, a backwoods Methodist, who had declared a holy war on prostitutes, bootleggers, gamblers, Darwinians and crooked politicians. When Sister Aimee went for a dip in the Pacific on a spring day in 1926 and surfaced some weeks later on the Mexican border, gasping out an incredible story of her escape from kidnappers, it was "Fighting Bob" Shuler who kept asking how she had managed to spend fourteen hours trudging across twenty miles of Arizona desert on a late June day without working up a sweat or getting sun-burned.

"Must I permit pastors who preach hate against my creed to lead the hordes of darkness against my church?" Aimee thundered, and when detectives turned up evidence indicating a romantic tryst in Carmel, she insisted, "My story is as true today as it was the first time I told it."

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Christianity, Louis Adamic wrote in 1927, was the city's third largest industry, "the two leading ones being real estate and the movies." Picture people in 1911 were looked on by the *Times* and its readers as "something of a pest," but fourteen years later the industry had an investment of more than a billion dollars in Southern California's sun-drenched beaches, boulevards, parks, mountains and deserts. Some 10,000 local film workers, drawing wages of \$1,500,000 a week, the *Times* reported, were turning out more than 90 percent of the world's motion pictures.

"Just a day after leaving the Land of the Saints, we are in what some have called the Land of the Sinners — the famous home of the movie industry," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle quipped when he arrived by train from a Salt Lake City lecture in May, 1923, just a year after the industry, speaking through its newly appointed morals custodian, Will Hays, had appeased sanctimonious moviegoers by banning Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle from the screen. Hays' professional condemnation of the comedian came less than a week after a San Francisco jury had found him not guilty of manslaughter in the death of a party girl during a Labor Day holiday at the St. Francis Hotel.

"The happening at the hotel was an unfortunate affair for which Arbuckle, so the evidence shows, was in no way responsible," the jurors announced. "We wish him success, and hope that the American people will take the judgment of fourteen men and women who have sat listening for thirty-one days to the evidence, that Roscoe Arbuckle is entirely innocent and free from all blame."

Arbuckle had lost his West Adams home, his cars, his servants and most of his friends in the year before Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle checked into the new \$5,000,000 Ambassador Hotel with their daughter and two sons. Sherlock Holmes' creator, a tall, gray-haired man in his early sixties, took a ride on one

A panorama from Spring and Main, 1917.  
World War I brought a relative quiet to the town-  
become-city, a hiatus between smug rectitude and  
exuberant kitsch.



of Catalina's glass-bottom boats (the island reminded him of Capri), went to Sid Grauman's Egyptian Theater to see *The Covered Wagon*, paid a ceremonial call on Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks ("it would be hard to meet two people who have been less spoiled by universal praise and wealth," he later wrote) and, on a Sunday drive to the Ventura oil fields, marvelled at the endless stream of automobiles flowing along the highway. "When we crowned a hill and looked back," he recalled, "we could see the whole long road dotted thickly, even when we were fifty miles from the city, for it was Sunday and everyone was out. There were no bicyclists and no pedestrians."

Bruce Bliven, writing for *The New Republic* a few years later (July 13, 1927), described Los Angeles as "a completely motorized civilization," and he went on to add that "nowhere else in the world have human beings so thoroughly adapted themselves to the automobile." His article appeared just two months after the death of Henry E. Huntington, whose trolley cars had shaped the city which the automobile had come to dominate.



## Hollywood parties: the way it was

A few years ago, I attended a dinner party at the home of Lewis Milestone, a party that was crowded with veteran producers, directors and writers. Somehow, the table talk veered to Hollywood orgies, and all agreed that they had never, never been to one — all, that is, except William Wyler, who is rather hard of hearing and who sat there quietly spooning his soup. Finally, one of his dinner partners put it to him directly. “Willy,” she asked, “have *you* ever been to a Hollywood orgy?”

“Yup,” he said, still spooning his soup.

“Tell us about it,” we all chorused.

“Nope,” he said, and went on with his soup.

Actually, in all the some twenty years that I’ve been living in this community, only once have I been invited to anything remotely resembling an orgy. A gregarious producer had just acquired a new Beverly Hills mansion and decided to throw a party for 200 of his nearest and dearest friends. Champagne flowed, the buffets were lavish, a small combo performed on the terrace, and there were bars everywhere. Thread- ing through the throng of celebrities I noticed — could hardly fail to notice — were a number of extraordinarily beautiful girls, all exquisitely dressed and seemingly unattached. “They’re call girls,” whispered my wife, who was far better informed than I in these matters. It turned out to be a very dull party. By 11:30 wherever I looked I saw one or another of these enchanting creatures using the telephone. “They’re checking their services for late dates,” my wife explained. Some Hollywood orgy!

While I have always heard that there were some pretty raunchy doings on the estates of the late Errol Flynn and Cecil B. DeMille, whose Biblical spectacles revealed a satyr’s penchant for revelry (and who was said to have pursued that passion considerably farther in the sybaritic seclusion of his rustic Paradise ranch, located in a box canyon high in Little Tujunga), most of the parties that I’ve attended — and certainly the ones that I remember with the most affection — have been relatively small, intimate gatherings.

Linking the old Hollywood with the present, for example, was the late Jack Oakie, who liked nothing better than to round out an evening sitting with a few close friends at the large oak table in his breakfast room, serving drinks from a *mannekin pis* reservoir and swapping reminiscences with his pals. Harold Lloyd, who was a superb photographer, loved to lead shutterbug friends on a fast-paced tour of his rambling acres, pausing only to point out the most advantageous angles from which to photograph them. He was invariably right! At Pickfair, Mary Pickford and “Buddy” Rogers would hold all but the most formal gatherings in their replica of a frontier-style saloon, complete with a bar brought ’round the Cape and small tables covered with red-and-white checked cloths . . . although the walls were lined with authentic Remingtons.

In the newer Hollywood, producer Alan Carr is the only one I know who continues the flamboyant tradition of theme parties established by Basil Rathbone in the Thirties, or the all-out bashes thrown by producer Sam Spiegel in the Forties. Carr’s sprawling Benedict Canyon estate (once the home of Ingrid Bergman) may be the scene of a Mexican fiesta one night and of a flashing disco party a few weeks later. For a recent birthday, he took over a Sunset Strip restaurant for the dinner and a La Cienega night spot for the subsequent entertainment, featuring that darling of the New York supper clubs, Bobby Short. Vying with Carr, publisher Hugh Hefner frequently turns his Holmby Hills mansion over to various liberal organizations for elaborate fund-raising festivals, although his intimates vastly prefer the Sunday afternoon get-togethers at which the screening of a new feature film is followed by an epicurean buffet.

On the other hand, my own happiest recollection of the new Hollywood’s style in entertainment is being met at the gate of their Benedict Canyon estate by Ann-Margret and her husband, Roger Smith, in a golf cart. They led my wife and me up the hill to their parking area, and we spent the rest of the evening in

*A 1927 premier (Hells Angels, sans Harleys) at Grauman's Chinese Theater. Sid, Hollywood's best agent ever, had earlier honored the kings of Thebes with his Egyptian Theatre.*



the kitchen, with her father, talking family talk. Or sharing the tab at a convivial Polish restaurant in Santa Monica with youthful director Gregory Nava, his talented wife, Ann Thomas, and Chicago-based critic Roger Ebert. There was nothing awkward about it; we simply enjoyed each other's company. Best-selling author and director Frank de Fellita happens to be one of the finest Italian chefs I've ever had the good fortune to encounter, and nothing makes him happier than the opportunity to prepare platters of *pasta* for friends who care equally for him, his work, and his food.

What has grown hearteningly apparent to me over

the past two decades is that the old idea of a Hollywood party as strictly a promotional affair, an excuse for a tax write-off, seems to be disappearing. Maybe they're still tax write-offs; that's something strictly between my host and his accountant. But I hear less shop talk at such gatherings these days; and the rift that formerly exiled the women to one end of the room for "girl talk" while the men discussed grosses at the other end has also diminished. And orgies, so far as I can see, have just about disappeared. Maybe it's all for the best, but somehow I find myself wishing that I could have joined Willy Wyler in just one — before it became too late.

— Arthur Knight



*The good earth of  
Los Angeles yielded fruits  
and vegetables in super-  
abundance back in 1925  
at the Union Wholesale  
Terminal Market.  
Below, Pacific Electric's Hill  
Street car yard, also 1925.*





"As early as 1924 more than a third of all Los Angeles commuters were relying on private autos, a proportion far outstripping any of the other ten largest American cities," Robert C. Post wrote in the *Southern California Quarterly* (September 1970). "This is one reason why Los Angeles has no transit system even today, although it has always exhibited a veritable mania for transit 'studies' and 'reports.'"

Bion J. Arnold, a consulting engineer on the development of New York's subway and the planner responsible for Chicago's street railway system, was brought to Los Angeles in 1911 to help the city fathers anticipate the transportation needs of the next ten to fifteen years, when the population was expected to rise from 350,000 to not less than one million. He recommended a municipally owned "one-city, one-fare" railroad which would add 80 miles to the Los Angeles Railway's 320 miles of narrow-gauge, single track within the city's borders. He also called attention to the city's lack of a master plan and urged the creation of a planning commission "to replace the present haphazard system of growth."

Carey McWilliams, a 16-year-old cultural rebel, liberated from the mores of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, by *This Side of Paradise*, settled in Los Angeles in 1922 and found himself in a "strange city that was changing every hour on the hour." When he came to look back on the experience in writing his autobiography, *The Education of Carey McWilliams* (1979), he accounted himself fortunate in having had "a ringside seat at a year-round circus," where "the whole saga of frontier growth and westward expansion, the storybook version of the American Dream, was given its penultimate staging in a semi-tropical setting at the western edge of the continent."

Los Angeles, in the view of McWilliams' friend, Louis Adamic, had become "the most American city in America" by 1927, when the population had risen to something around 1,300,000. Two out of every three Angelinos had moved from somewhere else in the previous decade. Successive waves of Middle Western farmers, druggists, morticians, shopkeepers and insurance salesmen had wiped out the Spanish-Mexican culture of the overgrown pueblo and, as Bruce Bliven observed, these same white Anglo-Saxon Protestants had come to be blamed "for all that is wrong with California civilization."

On the credit side, however, these same transplanted Middle Westerners had put public defenders on the municipal payroll long before most other American cities had got around to providing legal counsel for the poor. They had taxed themselves to support more college students, in proportion to population, than were to be found in any comparable city in the world. They had hit on the notion that the same voters who had put an inept or dishonest politician in public office could go back to the polls and remove him, an innovation they first put in practice in 1909, when they instituted recall proceedings against an incumbent who resigned. Any mention of Socialism would send shivers down their conservative spines, but a city-owned waterworks slaked their thirst and, in the 1920s, they were giving serious thought to untangling the downtown snarl of automobiles by setting up a city-owned mass rapid transit system.

"What Los Angeles is to excess, all our cities are to some extent," Sarah Comstock wrote in *Harper's*, (May, 1928). No other American city so clearly matched the expectations of the European visitor, she concluded. "Its mush-

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"Moronia."

H. L. Mencken, 1927

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room growth, its sprawling hugeness, its madcap speed, its splurge of lights and noise and color and money; and, against all this boisterous crudity, the amazing contrast of its cultured charm, its mature discrimination, its intellectual activities — this is sprung from American soil, and could come from no other.”

Much the same thing had been said nearly a hundred years earlier, when Alexis de Tocqueville and his friend, Gustave de Beaumont, came ashore at Cincinnati. “I don’t believe there exists anywhere on earth,” Beaumont wrote home, “a town which has had a growth so prodigious. Thirty years ago the banks of the Ohio were a wilderness. Now there are 30,000 inhabitants in Cincinnati.” Young Tocqueville found everything in the frontier community “in violent contrast, exaggerated; nothing has fallen into its final place.” Here, he wrote his mother, could be seen “all that there is of good or of bad in American society.”

Tocqueville, in the early 1830s, was struck by the progressive abandonment of English institutions as Americans moved westward. Lord Bryce, nearly two generations later, reported that “California, more than any other part of the Union, is a country by itself.” It had developed a “Pacific type,” which had “less of the English element than one discovers in the American who lives on the Atlantic side of the Rocky Mountains.” Los Angeles, as seen by a *New York Times* editorial writer in 1926, had “lost nearly all conscious relationship or connection with the European countries whence came its forebears.”

It was “the child of Hollywood out of Kansas with ancestral roots reaching back to the stony New England farm, the Missouri crossroads town, the Dixie cotton patch,” Lillian Symes reported in *Harper’s* (June, 1931). When the world’s press began to focus on the the film colony’s adulterous couplings, its addiction to dope and strong drink, and its delight in fast horses and hot dice, this new “Hollywood sophistication was painlessly absorbed because it was, after all, little more than Iowa-on-the-loose.”

“Elsewhere in America,” Carey McWilliams pointed out in *Southern California Country* (1946), “the *nouveaux riches* have generally been under some mild restraint of settled custom, inherited wealth, or social tradition. But in the Los Angeles of the ’twenties, the extravagant child-like tastes of the motion-picture elite were imitated at a dozen different socio-economic levels. The Cinderella attraction that the industry has exerted on all America has been greatly magnified in Los Angeles.”

McWilliams showed Edmund Wilson around town when he was gathering material for *The American Jitters* (1932). The tour included “Aimee McPherson’s wonderful temple,” “Syd Grauman’s Babylonian Garage” and an afternoon with Upton Sinclair. At no time during their three-hour discussion of politics and the Depression did their abstemious Socialist host offer them a drink. How, Wilson finally asked Sinclair, had he managed to endure capitalism for so many years without benefit of alcohol?

“All he got by way of an answer,” McWilliams recalled in his autobiography, “was a benign smile.”

Wilson made sport of the “mixturesque beauty” of the homes of Angelinos, which seemed to express their emotional ties to “their favorite historical films, their best-beloved movie actresses, their luckiest numerological combinations or their previous incarnations in old Greece, romantic Egypt, quaint Sussex or

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*“Life takes on a dreadful  
vacuity here. I don’t  
know what I miss.”*

James M. Cain, 1933

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among the high priestesses of love of old India."

He had great fun with such imaginative examples as "a Pekinese pagoda made of fresh and crackly peanut butter," "a snow-white marshmallow igloo," "a toothsome pink nougat in the Florentine manner," "a clean pocket-size replica of heraldic Warwick Castle," "a wee wonderful Swiss shilly-shally" and "a hot little hacienda, a regular *enchilada con queso* with a roof made of rich red tomato sauce."

Earnest Elmo Calkins took a different tack when he looked into "The California Legend" for the *Atlantic* (February, 1930). "The country is a sort of vast civic laboratory where experiments in living are tried out under favorable conditions," he wrote. "The Californians begin with *now*, with nothing to undo, and have an opportunity to solve our problems of the built-up East on a clean slate without erasing the old examples that came out wrong."

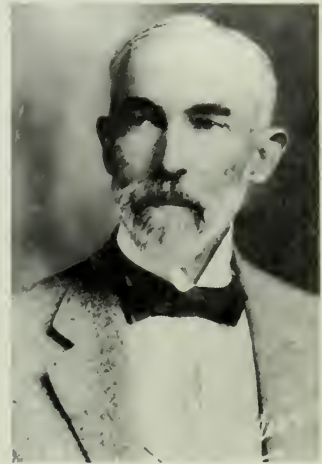
But public transportation, once the city's pride, had in the last quarter-century brought on a massive municipal headache. "The city has no subways," Mildred Adams wrote in the *New York Times Magazine* (August 3, 1930), "its bus lines and its street car systems are hopelessly inadequate. If you want a taxicab you must telephone and then wait until a driver can be waked up and sent forth." She was fascinated by the Plaza, with its seething mixture of Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, Negroes, whites and "as many variants as the mathematical law of permutations will allow." Like earlier visitors, she saw the city as a laboratory, where immigrants from various states and countries were making experiments "in race mixture and in religion, in the scope and power of government; experiments in ways of living and dressing, in house-furnishing, in the selling and buying of food, in the essentials of ordering existence; experiments in emotion and in loyalties, experiments in morality. For the student of human behavior, of urban civilization in the making, of developing America, the town is full of marvelous material."

Some came to marvel, others to mock. George Creel, expressing a point of view prevalent in San Francisco, described Southern California as "the world's closest approach to bedlam and babel." Bertrand Russell said it had achieved "the ultimate segregation of the unfit" and Westbrook Pegler, the sports writer turned pundit, suggested the area "be declared incompetent and placed in charge of a guardian."

The inmates of this vast, unfenced asylum terrified wealthy, right-thinking California businessmen when they rallied behind Upton Sinclair's 1934 End Poverty in California crusade. Harry Chandler joined forces with William Randolph Hearst, Louis B. Mayer, Texas oilmen and Sister Aimee Semple McPherson Hutton (she'd married a chubby choir singer) to repel the "Moscow agent." The film studios ground out fake newsreels to frighten taxpayers and threatened to move to Florida if Californians chose this Socialist-turned-Democrat as their next governor.

"They couldn't move if they wanted to," Sinclair assured his disciples. "Their investment here is too great. Besides, think of what those big Florida mosquitoes would do to some of our film sirens. Why, one bite on the nose could bring a \$50,000 production loss."

The manner in which Sinclair went down to defeat, wrote Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "reshaped California politics for a generation." The Republican victory "marked a new advance in the art of public relations, in which



Gaylord Wilshire, c. 1925



advertising men now believed they could sell or destroy political candidates as they sold one brand of soap and defamed its competitor. . . . In another twenty years, the techniques of manipulation employed so crudely in 1934 would spread east, achieve a new refinement, and begin to dominate the politics of the nation."

In the depths of the Depression, when the 150th anniversary of the city's founding rolled around, a Black columnist on the *California Eagle* complained that "this city has no money to waste on senseless decorations, flags, rodeos and other schoolboy stunts. We are facing a winter in which hundreds of poor and destitute men, women and children will go without adequate food, clothing and shelter." But the city blew about half a million dollars on its September, 1931, Fiesta, prompting the *Christian Century* to remark, "If you can't pay the interest on the mortgage, can't you at least throw a party?"

Despite the bareness of their municipal cupboard, Angelinos not only threw a party and started tidying up the premises for the 1932 Olympic Games, they also joined their urban neighbors in approving a \$220,000,000 bond issue to bring Colorado River water to their kitchens, bathrooms and front lawns. The building of the Owens Valley aqueduct was replayed by a new cast of characters, but this time the engineers went to the desert with modern refrigeration and gasoline trucks. Although the two aqueducts covered about the

Opulence rising in  
Hollywood, 1926.  
Top left is macho actor  
William Farnum's mansion,  
at the bottom is movie mogul  
Jesse Lasky's house.





*Signal Hill grew a forest of oil derricks in Long Beach. Neighbor Los Angeles sent Evelyn Brent, "cinema actress," as emissary in 1926.*

same distance (around 240 miles), the new one cost ten times as much as Bill Mulholland's.

"A dream of empire coming true before our eyes," W. P. Whitsett, chairman of the Metropolitan Water District's board of directors, said in November, 1939, when the main line went into operation, pouring 270,000 gallons of water a minute into a reservoir near Riverside, from which it could be carried to thirteen member cities.

The towns surrounding Los Angeles ran together "like oil spots on a paper, without any organic center, inner structure, or unity," Paul Schrecker, a European philosopher, observed in *Harper's* (September, 1944). The city had "a certain aesthetic character only where its growth has not disturbed primitive elements, as in the Mexican district; or where there has been an effort at cosmopolitan elegance, as in certain parts of Beverly Hills; or where nature is so gloriously beautiful that even the worst infractions of good taste cannot destroy its charm, as on the coast of Santa Monica." The bad taste of its pseudo-elegance seemed to him "to be fake bad taste, and even the slums to be fake slums."

When he rated "America's Ten Best Cities for Negroes" in *Negro Digest* (October, 1947), Horace Cayton, co-author of *Black Metropolis*, called Los Angeles "a good town for Negroes," but went on to say that the city was "vying with Chicago in the matter of writing and enforcing restrictive covenants — they even use them against American Indians." Even so, he added, "most of the middle class and upper class Negroes, as well as a good number of just common folk, have purchased attractive private dwellings in nice, quiet neighborhoods."

Although Los Angeles is the country's only major city founded by settlers who were predominantly of African descent, it had only 2,100 Negroes in the 1900 census. Ten years later the number had gone up to 7,600. The Black



## the architecture of the city eclectic

Los Angeles is so rich in architecture, good and bad, that people have written thick books on the subject and still not done it justice. The task of condensing its architectural history is challenging because it forces the writer to identify the events that have contributed most to the image of the city.

The first event in importance, if not chronology, was the transportation system. Without the "Big Red Cars" and then the freeways, Los Angeles would have lacked any coherence at all. But the second major event, made possible by the transportation system, was the realization of the American Dream of a free-standing house, be it ever so humble, set in a garden under the sun. The single-family dwelling was until very recently, when the apartment house began to replace it on a large scale, the standard of living in Southern California. The bungalow, a simple one-story or one-and-a-half-story house *with style*, was the apotheosis of this dream. If ye seek a monument, look around you.

Other considerations, besides privacy in a mass society, have been on the Los Angeles mind. Certainly a concern for the Hispanic heritage, Iberian and Mexican, had preoccupied Angelinos almost from the beginning of Yankee rule, a concern first displayed in the late nineteenth-century interest in the decaying missions and then their restoration — and the coincidental revival of their forms in contemporary domestic and public architecture. The Mission Revival, like its eastern Shingle and Georgian Revival counterparts, was, however, more than a recognition of native roots; it stood as a symbol of a quieter day before Yankee commerce and industry intruded upon the presumed idyllic life in Southern California.

There is a conservative strain in Los Angeles' history. The Mission Revival and its "looking back" are signs of it. Nevertheless, the Mission Revival also suggested a different tack. Missions carry one's thoughts to Spain whose architectural tradition was far from spartan. The flamboyance of Spanish Baroque (Churrigueresque), and of the even richer

Islamic tradition had, for reasons best left to psycho-historians, an enormous attraction for Angelinos. Soon the cityscape was dotted with Spanish Baroque store-fronts and Moorish hotels and movie palaces. The invitation to eclecticism was contagious. Other styles emerged. Fantasy was unloosed.

The third major event in the architectural history of Los Angeles was the development of a tradition of uninhibited expression that is noticeably different from other great cities. Even the madness of Tokyo's Ginza seems tame when compared to the hilarity of the choicest stretches of Pico, Sepulveda, Santa Monica and especially Ventura boulevards. It is significant that the Tail-of-the-Pup on La Cienega should recently take its place on the list of official cultural-historic monuments of Los Angeles, a list that also includes such an impropriety as the Hollywood Sign. In fact, low-art frivolity, not to mention vulgarity, has touched high art — from Frank Lloyd Wright's "Mayan" Hollyhock House to Cesar Pelli's Pacific Design Center ("The Blue Whale").

Madness just as divine is displayed in the 1920s' proliferation of Hansel-and-Gretel architecture, with its rolled eaves, window boxes (artificial flowers), and dovecotes (sans doves), enough to bring out the child in the most sophisticated septuagenarian. The calculated vulgarity of the drive-ins, especially those built in the 'fifties, is remarkable — as is the splendor of factory facades in Vernon, Huntington Park, and Commerce. Who ever heard of so much effort being spent on re-creating Babylon for a tire company as that expended by the firm of Morgan, Walls and Clements for the Samson Tyre and Rubber Company (more recently Uniroyal)? Or Robert V. Derrah's fantastic remodelling of three old buildings for the Coca-Cola Company in order to make them look like a ship? What an act of redundancy it was for the people of Long Beach to tug the Queen Mary into their harbor when it was already steaming down Central Avenue in Los Angeles — and making Cokes and money!



Mimetic architecture was the city's sometime shame . . . and late-lamented glory. Why not dispense sherbet from an igloo, at Pico and Victoria in 1935?



The Coca-Cola Bottling Plant points to another aspect of our fantasy — our attitude toward the future. It is one of the world's outstanding examples of the Streamline Moderne (we used to call it "modernistic") style that arose in the 'thirties out of colorful dreams of the future (a time when the future otherwise looked rather bleak). It was inspired by an imagination that expected the future to be speedy. The idea is first found most explicitly in the early novels (1890s) of H. G. Wells who envisioned a world of streamline curves, helicopters dangling over high-rises, space ships careening through star-clogged skies, and aerial free-ways bringing everything together. Wells' classics in the field were *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), the latter made into a popular movie in 1934. The vision was picked up by comic strips such as "Flash Gordon," and its sounds were heard in a children's radio serial, "Buck Rogers in the Twenty-fifth Century."

While other parts of the country experienced the Streamline Moderne, nowhere is there such a quantity of its monuments in domestic as well as public architecture as in the Los Angeles area. As a matter of fact, the popular conception of the future was closely

related to a more sophisticated version of modernity, the early International Style whose earliest interpreters, the Europeans R. M. Schindler and Richard Neutra, soon to be joined by J. R. Davidson, Gregory Ain, Kem Weber, Jock Peters, Raphael Soriano and other architects and designers, wavered between the streamline and the International straight. They really differed from the modernistic popularizers in their seriousness of purpose, their sense that modern architecture was a moral mission to save humanity from eclectic sin. While the earnestness of these architects has become old-fashioned, if not funny, it is simply true that no students of modern architecture can afford to ignore Los Angeles, though many of them do.

Much good as well as fascinating architecture has appeared in Los Angeles since 1960, but it lacks the special quality of what I have called the major events. The Pacific Design Center is a loud statement, but it does not seem a momentous utterance — and its architect has deserted Los Angeles. Events may be brewing in the offices of Charles Moore and Frank Gehry and Roland Coate, Jr., but here I will have to fall back upon that alibi of my profession and plead that it is too soon to say.

— Robert Winter

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*"... the U.S.A. would be better off if that big, sprawling, incoherent, shapeless, slobbering civic idiot in the family of American communities, the city of Los Angeles, could be declared incompetent and placed in charge of a guardian like an individual mental defective."*

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Westbrook Pegler, 1938

population had doubled by 1920. It was during this decade that racial restrictions in housing covenants originally aimed at Orientals, Mexicans and Jews were applied to Negroes. At that time Negroes made up only 2.6 percent of the city's total population. Thirty years later they constituted 8.7 percent, making Los Angeles a major metropolitan center of Black America.

Meanwhile, when affluent Black families were looking about for suitable housing in the 1940s, they turned to West Adams Heights, one of the few remaining examples of the planned urban elegance of the early 1900s. Norman Houston, a native Californian, a graduate of its university and the founding father of a successful insurance company, was the first Negro to buy a house in the community. Five years later, when white neighbors went to court to enforce the community's racially restrictive covenants, a Black lawyer, Loren Miller, argued the case for such homeowners as Hattie McDaniel, Louise Beavers and Dr. J. A. Somerville, the first Negro to be admitted to the School of Dentistry of the University of Southern California (his wife, Dr. Vada Somerville, was the second).

Judge Thurmond Clarke delivered the first ruling ever handed down in an American court declaring such covenants unconstitutional. Miller later took another case, *Shelley vs. Kraemer*, to the United States Supreme Court and in May, 1948, six justices agreed with the arguments first presented in Los Angeles. In the intervening years Black Angelinos had filed more suits contesting the validity of the covenants than Blacks in all the forty-seven other states.

The same intolerable conditions which drove so many Negroes out of the South were visited upon Mexican laborers who streamed north across the border in the 1920s. Editorial writers, echoing the views of their exploiters, the Associated Farmers, praised their lack of "political ambitions." By 1930, however, when they had begun to organize and strike, the same writers were calling for "repatriation" as a means of "getting Mexicans off relief." The myth of their docility had been exploded.

Once Japanese Angelinos had been herded off to internment camps in the spring of 1942, McWilliams notes in *North From Mexico* (1948), "it was a foregone conclusion that Mexicans would be substituted as the major scapegoat group." A year of inflammatory newspaper articles, police beatings and trials on trumped-up charges culminated on a June, 1943, evening with the attack by Anglo servicemen on young Mexican Angelinos dressed in the *pachuco* uniform of the day, long coats with wide shoulders and pleated, high-waisted, pegged pants.

"The zoot-suit riots in Los Angeles were the spark that touched off a chain-reaction of riots across the country in midsummer, 1943," McWilliams wrote, struck by the irony that the racial explosions in such cities as Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit and New York should have been ignited in the blood-stained streets of a city founded by Mexican pobladores.

War's end found Los Angeles booming. In the first two years following V-J Day some \$450,000,000 went into factories and machinery, providing jobs for thousands of the 949,585 newcomers who had turned up since the bombing of Pearl Harbor. They were busy building airplanes, assembling automobiles, making tires and furniture, catching fish and stitching sportswear, but, as *Time* reported (July 4, 1947), Los Angeles was still "the richest agricultural county and the most productive dairying county in the nation." In the previ-



*A bungalow, a lawn, a pair of palms of your own . . . the American working-man's dream, Los Angeles style, was omnipresent in the pre-Depression year of 1926.*



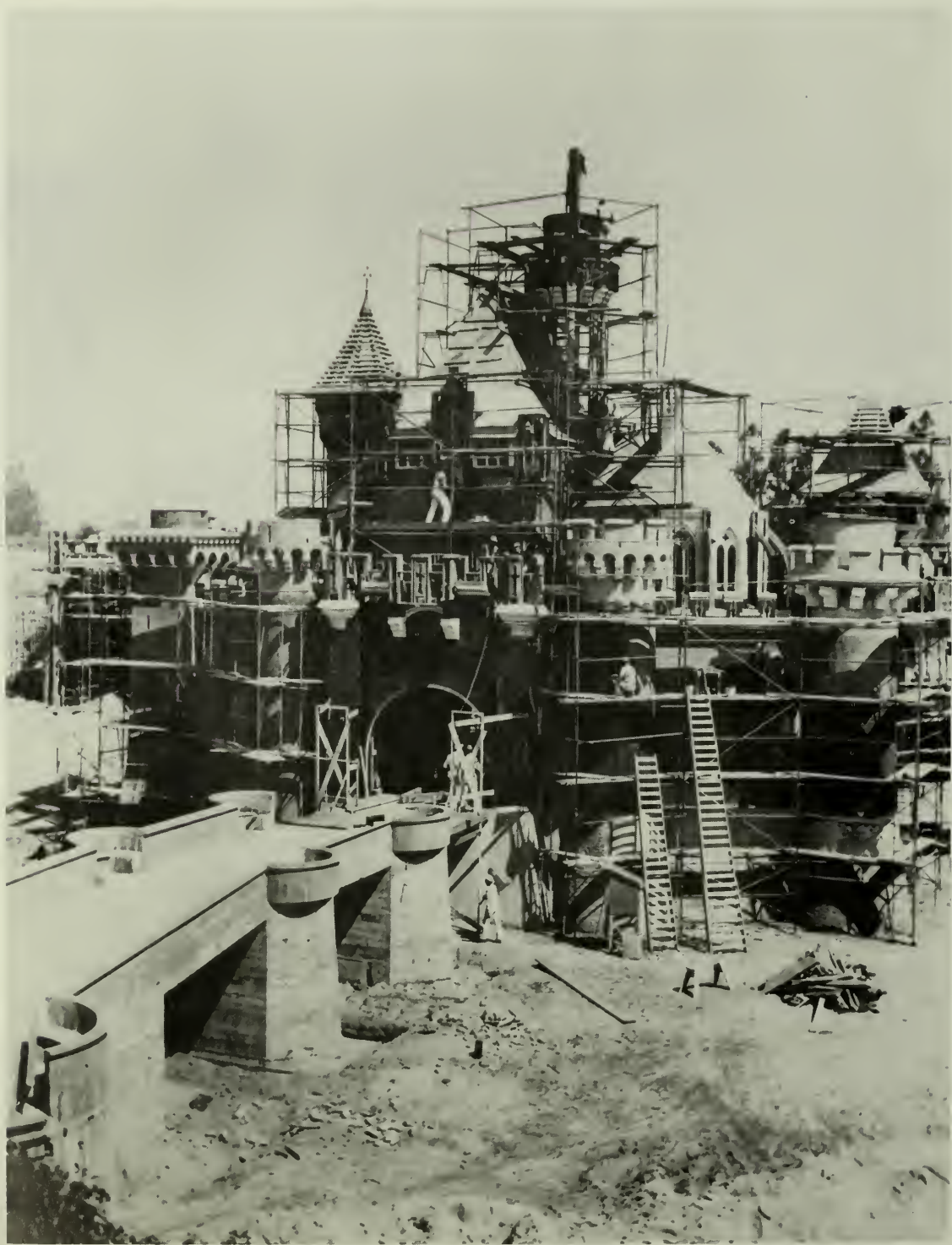
ous eight years, four of war, four of peace, it had become clear to the editors that "Los Angeles will never be like anything else on earth."

As the 1940s ended, people were pouring in at the rate of 3,000 a week, looking for a roof, a job and a place to park. The sun above the beaches, parks and boulevards they had seen so often on the screen was obscured at times by a sepia ceiling that stung their eyes, but on a clear day they could still see Catalina and, perhaps, Mickey Rooney as well. Overnight they became Angelinos. After a member of the wartime colony of distinguished European refugees took the oath of citizenship, he joked to his friend, Thomas Mann, "Now I get a Cadillac and a divorce."

Men, women and children of every color and creed had fled dust storms, separate but unequal schools, pogroms, impoverished Asian villages, dying New England mill towns and the rigors of a Minnesota winter to live their own lives in their own way, free of the past, in this improbable semi-tropical setting where oil refineries and aircraft plants had sprung up around orange groves and film studios. The eclectic metropolis spread across the western rim of the American frontier mirrored a nation of immigrants as the United States entered the second half of what had come to be referred to as "The American Century."



*Sleeping Beauty Castle under construction at Disneyland*



# Problems and Promise in Tomorrowland

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BY 1950, A CENTURY AFTER ITS BECOMING AN AMERICAN CITY, LOS ANGELES stood an industrial and financial giant. Suddenly, after the war years, it was more than flowers, winter vegetables, oranges, movies, and oil derricks. World War II had ended its farm and Hollywood eras. The war, which was as Asian as European, and a holocaust in the Pacific, had made Los Angeles the premier West Coast port for ships and planes. It handled more seaport tonnage than San Francisco, landed more fish than Boston and Gloucester, and together with satellite cities it made more planes than any other metropolis on earth.

Los Angeles also assembled more cars than any city but Detroit, baked more tires than any city but Akron, made more furniture than Grand Rapids, and stitched together more clothes than any city except New York — and even led New York in designing and manufacturing sportswear. It was the national capital for the production of motion pictures, radio programs, and — within a few years — television shows.

During the undeclared wars in Korea and Vietnam, and during the relatively peaceful interludes devoted to tourism and international commerce, the city maintained its preeminence. With big layoffs of workers after each war, new companies offered employment in improvised factories that began in old loft buildings, in Quonset huts, and in backyard garages, processing food and flowers, making chain saws, chinaware, hand tools, coat hangers, scientific instruments, electronic devices of all sorts, sliding doors, automobile accessories, and kitchen units for prefabricated houses. Indeed, during the years 1947 to 1957, manufacturing employment grew ten times faster than in the country as a whole.

Construction boomed responsively. In 1950 Los Angeles was the first United States metropolis to remove controls on rent, spurring subdividers

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*"Here is the world's prize collection of cranks, semi-cranks, placid creatures whose bovine expression shows that each of them is studying, without much hope of success, to be a high-grade moron, angry or ecstatic exponents of food fads, sun-bathing, ancient Greek costumes, diaphragm breathing and the imminent second coming of Christ."*

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Bruce Bliven, 1935

and builders to provide new homes and multiple units. These meant jobs for workers and homes for ex-G.I.s. New tracts, in turn, meant new schools, churches, supermarkets, service stations — structures and facilities for new multitudes. In 1957 there were more retail sales in Los Angeles County than in Oregon, Washington, Colorado, and Arizona combined.

Already by 1952 Los Angeles, city and county, had more passenger cars than any other county area in the nation — 40 percent more than in all the New York City boroughs, 47 percent more than in Chicago's Cook County. Only California itself and six other states — and no foreign country — had more cars than Los Angeles County, and annual statistics were only beginning to mount. Streetcar lines were dying from lack of riders.

While journalists and visitors from the East Coast and the Old World continued to label Los Angeles with pejorative epithets, the satirical jabbing declined, being replaced by attentive analysis, even awe. The burg of eccentricity, always exaggerated and a little ridiculous, was now a serious and portentous phenomenon that the eastern states had to do business with and that Japan and Hong Kong were already seeking ties with. Los Angeles was a statistical marvel and a maker of precedents. No other United States city was so decentralized, so seemingly fragmented, yet none was more vigorous. Though one of the oldest cities west of the Mississippi, it insisted on appearing to be the youngest.

Industrialized Los Angeles was not just the first big city to be entirely dominated by the internal combustion engine. Endowed with ample space on a sea plain and in interior valleys, sharing with other California towns the only strip of Mediterranean climate in the entire nation, Los Angeles was in effect becoming a city state, a megalopolis with an imperial reach in the American Southwest, central California — indeed, in the whole Pacific Basin.

Increasingly the words Los Angeles, meaning the city, came to be identified with the urbanized County of Los Angeles with its scores of other cities (80 in 1979) and its large unincorporated but citified area. Persons who commented on "L.A." had in mind much that lay outside the rangy city limits. No tourist guidebook to "L.A." stayed inside the limits, nor did any history of the city. The words "Los Angeles" had become an umbrella word that covered the material developments, the style of life, and the novelties in adjoining Ventura, San Bernardino, and Orange counties — a metropolitan area small on a map of the continent but huge and prestigious in the minds of the world's population. Los Angeles meant a bulky world city, a muscular region with an enormous impact on humankind, and a complex symbol of the future in both work and play.

Powerful though it was, the city was far from being a separate, integral monolith of power. Much of the city government's income was "pass-through" money from county, state, and federal sources, always hedged with administrative rules and restrictions. Some former city functions like beaches and health came to be merged with county departments. Much of the city's functioning was limited by court decisions, state laws, the stipulations of its own charter, and the actions of other agencies.

For instance, the county and the state ran the principal museums inside the city — for art, science, and history. The Army Corps of Engineers built and managed the basic flood-control system, while a regional district monitored



air pollution. National and state departments, working through the county, administered the welfare program, the mainstay of whole neighborhoods. The board for the independent Los Angeles Unified School District, overlapping adjoining cities and including an area almost 250 square miles larger than the City of Los Angeles (itself engrossing 464 square miles), ran the hundreds of public schools.

Despite its necessary involvement with other levels of government, Los Angeles faced so many special opportunities — and problems — that its officials found plenty to do, or to leave undone for lack of means or popular support.

The most visible, clear symbol of political authority inside the city is the non-partisan mayorship, partly because Los Angeles is the gigantic local city, partly because the county, although it has vaster resources and powers, lacks a mayor. (The five county supervisors divide up governance and rotate their chairmanship.) The City Hall with the mayor's office and the Council's chamber is the nearest to a center that the city has and its impressive western facade is the favorite place for groups that meet to protest or to celebrate.

To a large degree, citizens measure the city by the quality of its mayor, his personality, the issues he articulates, the stands and the actions he takes, even though his powers were limited by the Progressives, who, determined to prevent bossism, gave Los Angeles a "weak-mayor" system. The Charter of 1925 made the 15-person Council, elected from districts, "the governing body of the city," empowered to make final decisions. In part the history of Los Angeles from 1950 to 1980 lends itself to a chronological account of mayors and officialdom. In part it calls for a thematic analysis of pervasive social and economic trends beyond the immediate control of politics.

As the 1950s opened, the mayor was Fletcher Bowron, then in his fourth term of office. He was a former Superior Court judge, elected mayor when the voters recalled his predecessor. Supporters praised his "bulldog tenacity." Short, serious, crusty, scholarly, with a sense of history, wearing dark shoes and suits and rimless spectacles, Bowron could, despite his "weak-mayor" status, look back on accomplishments.

Beginning in the late 1930s, his administration had cleaned out gambling houses, bookie joints, slot machines, brothels, and practices such as payment for jobs and civil-service ratings. Bowron had rid the city of gangsters and racketeers, expanded city services for water and sewage, helped provide housing during the war years, and urged the beginnings of a freeway system. Under his leadership the city started building Los Angeles International Airport on a 640-acre grainfield, revitalized the Planning Department, modernized the building codes, and in 1952 enacted the nation's first ordinance to regulate bulldozing in the hills.

Though Bowron was nominally a Republican, he spoke up for tax-supported housing for the poor, a stand he took in 1952; and that, according to Councilman L.E. Timberlake, cost him the election in 1953. Norris Poulson, the former legislator and Congressman who defeated Bowron, accused him of performing "partisan actions in a non-partisan office," and Democratic leaders called Bowron an "imitation liberal" posing as "the little man's friend."

Poulson moved to curtail the city's housing program but soon found that a dynamic city led him to push for other public programs. In 1954 he attacked

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*"This lovely place, cuckoo land, is corrupted with an odd community giddiness. . . . Nowhere else do eccentrics flourish in such close abundance. Nowhere do spiritual or economic panaceas grow so lushly. Nowhere is undisciplined gullibility so widespread."*

Life Magazine, 1930s

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*Major league sports brought major league moments. Here the one and only Sandy Koufax finishes up a no-hitter in Dodger Stadium.*



“the palace guard” — department heads like Lloyd Aldrich, City Engineer, who held up necessary public-works projects. Poulson pushed to completion the International Airport, which opened in 1961. Freeways, built by the state, lengthened — from 22 miles in 1952 to 83 in 1960.

Facing the big problem posed by the automobile, Poulson argued for a ban on curbside parking during rush hours, for more one-way streets, and for parking lots at bus and street-car terminals. In 1954 he named a group to study traffic noise. In 1958 he called for an end to the automatic transmission, which augmented air pollution. The next year in a letter to all local automobile dealers he accused Detroit’s car makers of putting profit ahead of smog control. In 1960 he was an early official proponent of small cars, exchanging his big-city-supplied car for a small Rambler that would produce more economy and less smog.

Poulson supported improved sewerage facilities and pushed for action on the Bunker Hill Development Program, started in 1949 in the central district. He also appointed a representative to handle matters that affected the third of a million Latinos in the city. Before and after his reelection in 1957, Poulson urged fair police treatment to minority citizens, racial integration in the Fire Department, and better wages for city employees. Mindful of the city’s cultural needs, he defended contributing subsidies to the Hollywood Bowl, the Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Greek Theater, and also worked for creating a new big zoo that would rank as one of the world’s great zoological displays.

Basic municipal problems, air pollution and trash as well as sewage, remained on his mind. He rejoiced in 1957 when the County Air Pollution Control District banned backyard incinerators. In subsequent action he himself got a proposition put on the ballot to create a municipal system to collect combustible rubbish. It passed in spite of opposition from the Greater Los

Angeles Rubbish Council, which sued him for accusing private collectors of "evil motive, malice and ill-will."

Poulson stood by the tradition of growth, which required more water, and in 1959 he accepted appointment from Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr., to serve as head in Southern California of the enormous state water-bond campaign; and he attacked the Metropolitan Water District for opposing the bond issue. He became a spokesman for cities' claims to federal monies.

In his own eyes, one of Poulson's most notable achievements was to establish the city in big-league baseball. The growth of airplane travel and of western cities was revolutionizing professional sports, leading to reorganization of the traditional leagues. Operating from "the corner pocket" (the mayor's office), Poulson maneuvered to get Walter O'Malley's Dodgers baseball team away from Brooklyn. In 1958 it arrived, to reward within a year its new fans with a World Series win in the Coliseum.

In order to get the Dodgers a playing field of their own, the mayor, as he admitted later, dealt "loosely with city property," engaging in "shenanigans . . . in the interest of expedience." He used money donated by Howard Hughes to survey city lands in Chavez Ravine, part of Elysian Park. Since the city could not give away city lands to a private corporation, Poulson arranged to trade 300 acres for private acreage, the former ballpark Wrigley Field, worth much less and owned by O'Malley, and also to contribute millions of city dollars for grading and building roads to the new Dodger Stadium at Chavez Ravine. His plan faced strong opposition from a bloc of Councilmen and citizens' groups, but in a suit that reached the U.S. Supreme Court, Poulson won. In 1962 Poulson conceded that he had pulled strings. "And I have no regrets, even though the fallout doubtless cost me the last election."

A much more important action promoted by Poulson was the city's repeal in 1956 of its 45-year-old height law that restricted buildings to 150 feet or 13 stories. The law had encouraged the sideways growth of Los Angeles; the city now began to shoot upwards, with confidence in new earthquake-proof construction techniques.

Critics accused Poulson of making too many trips out of town, a charge his successors were also to face, but the mayor's job had become more and more involved with decisions made in Sacramento and Washington, or even in capitals like Tokyo and Mexico City. Yet he was no cosmopolite, as one incident showed. In the fall of 1953 the mayor asked Eartha Kitt to take part in a star-studded benefit he was giving at Cocoanut Grove in honor of the visiting king and queen of Greece. At the time Kitt was appearing regularly at a nightspot, the Mocambo, on the Sunset Strip. Among the songs she sang for the royal couple was the sexy but innocuous "C'est si bon." A day or so later, at a conference in his office, Poulson referred to her as "un-American" and "risqué." He said she did not represent good American art. The newspapers picked up the story. Jack Benny called on the mayor to set him straight. The royal Greeks sent the singer a telegram: "We don't know what all the fuss is about. We thoroughly enjoyed the show." Thanks to Poulson's prudish disapproval, sales of Kitt's records soared, and she went on to full-house audiences in Las Vegas.

Poulson's success in bringing west and housing the Dodgers, a private company, was partly his undoing, as he said. In the 1961 campaign, although

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*"There are only two places left in the world where world figures can find quantities of their friends. They are Los Angeles and New York. These are the crossroads. Paris and London have been cut out of itineraries."*

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Tom Treanor, 1941



## the environment of movement

In Los Angeles no one drives all the time, and only some people are in cars much of the time — yet the sum total of driving at any one time is enough to constitute a permanent state, an environment of movement. In *Play It As It Lays*, Joan Didion places her principal character in just that environment, and writes one of the great freeway passages of California literature:

Once she was on the freeway and had maneuvered her way to a fast lane she turned on the radio at high volume and she drove. She drove the San Diego to the Harbor, the Harbor up to the Hollywood, the Hollywood to the Golden State, the Santa Monica, the Santa Ana, the Pasadena, the Ventura. She drove it as a riverman runs a river, every day more attuned to its currents, its deceptions . . . Again and again she returned to an intricate stretch just south of the interchange where successful passage from the Hollywood onto the Harbor required a diagonal move across four lanes of traffic. On the afternoon she finally did it without once braking or once losing the beat on the radio she was exhilarated, and that night slept dreamlessly.

The dependency on the car in Los Angeles derives, ironically, from what was once a fine public transportation system, the Pacific Electric. It was, in fact, not the car, but the friendly Big Red Car that dispersed Los Angeles to the far reaches of the basin. Traces of its railbed still remain throughout the city, and the disposition of the city's oldest buildings implies its old routes. The automobile came along and established living patterns independent of the old Pacific Electric lines. Just as Los Angeles preferred the free-standing house to the apartment, it preferred the car to the trolley. As a matter of planning policy, the city eventually retired the trolley: from a car's point of view, the trolley and its tracks were a nuisance; furthermore, the car was a symbol of the future, which Los Angeles ushered in with ever more blacktop. Meanwhile, Detroit actively promoted its buses and lobbied against the Pacific Electric. The city ended up with a road network that extended everywhere — distributing Angelinos evenly over the basin because the car, un-



*The past and future meet on Hill Street, 1906. "La Fiesta," an annual Anglo-American celebration of a romanticized Hispanic past, sported its first automobile.*

like the trolley, was free to drive anywhere.

Los Angeles acquired its first freeway — the Pasadena — in the late 1930s. Freeways now extend for hundreds of miles within the city boundaries, superimposed on the older street grid — constructions so monumental that they are almost of a natural scale. The freeways are so interdependent that one can circle the city endlessly. Like English gardens, L.A. freeways never dead-end; there is no sense of the boundary of the garden, and the end of an experience, because the paths circle, and splice, and simply continue.

Similarly, the freeways are so effortless that there is not so much a sense of distance as a sense of time. People say that Alhambra and Downtown are 25 minutes apart; commuters will generally tolerate 30 minutes, each way, before they start to complain. A relationship between a man living in Malibu and a woman living in San Pedro will founder if only because the time spent on the freeway far exceeds the

half-hour tolerance. There are many cities in the U.S. connected by freeways, but few in which the freeways are vital in connecting parts of the *same* city, as in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, in the car, the radio or tapedeck is on. Angelinos drive to music. A good sound system fills the cabin of the car, enveloping the driver in sound. Few experiences can match a Viennese waltz on the San Diego Freeway through the Santa Monica Mountains; the rhythms of the hills and curves, at 55 mph, somehow glide with the waltz. The triumphant cadences of Beethoven's heroic symphonies are especially exhilarating through the tunnels of the Pasadena Freeway. The music itself is almost a sound-track overlay that turns the drive into a movie. One can often see, a car or two over, a tuned-in, turned-on driver singing with the windows rolled up — as though the driver were at home in a shower. Even motorcycles can come equipped with AM/FM radios.

Motion — particularly if it is uninterrupted, on a freeway, with the windows up — dissociates a driver from the city. This isolation allows the quiet and the time to ponder. The experience immediately becomes more physical, and less contemplative, if the windows are rolled down, and the wind streams in; if there is an open sunroof, the ride is a completely outdoor experience. One has a much greater sense of speed — no matter what the actual speed — in an open or opened car. Air-conditioned cabins, with closed windows, reduce the sensation of moving. Some cabins are so comfortable, with their music, temperature, and seats, that they lull drivers into a feeling of security, even at high speeds. The drive is a minor miracle of serenity especially if all cars are driving at the same speed and seem stationary relative to each other — a perception that increases a driver's feeling of security, however false.

That so many people drive so much orients the city to the car. Like a sunflower following the sun, Los Angeles physically turns to the car. The parade of cars on Sunset Boulevard has provoked a stunning se-

quence of billboards. The way to see Sunset Boulevard is not on foot, but in a car, at 35 mph. The buildings on Wilshire Boulevard have a back facade, because everyone enters those buildings from the back parking lots; the front facades are only symbolic of their previous function as primary entrance. Some buildings have closed off the front entry altogether. Movement in itself is an environmental experience, but the act of moving in a car has also elicited autotropic changes in the built environment.

Los Angeles is a city of, by and for vehicular movement. And the time spent driving between places is a substantial part of life in the city — an ephemeral action, but a constant state, integral to the city's urban content.

—Joseph Giovannini



*The Broadway Street tunnel, 1935*



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*"Charming lussy, Los Angeles! We first endure — then adore. We come to scoff, remain to play. We go native. We sink into a pleasant lethargy of indifference to time and tide, wrapping our senses in sweet sedative, even as Southern California fog wraps weary nerves in relaxation."*

Helen Lopez, 1941

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four newspapers supported him, he lost to Samuel Yorty, also a former state legislator and Congressman, and an avowed anti-Communist. Yorty made much of the Chavez Ravine land deal. He also waged a major, populist daytime campaign on television to simplify refuse collection by picking up everything in one can once a week. In 1961 householders had to separate combustible rubbish, garbage (used to feed hogs) and tin cans (recycled by a metals firm), for collection on different days. Yorty said the city was making wives perform "coolie labor for a salvage firm."

Yorty, who used a city Chrysler, not a Rambler, made headlines for three terms with extreme statements and theatrical stunts — such as a brief stint as a disc jockey — that discredited him with thoughtful voters but won him popular and labor support. On a more responsible level he attacked the Charter as "an antiquated, outmoded document" that saddled the mayor "with responsibility without authority" and kept him from doing all that he wanted. He argued for updating the form of city government to enable officials and departments to adopt new means adequate for meeting new, complex problems. He squabbled repeatedly with the Council.

In 1965 Yorty defeated James Roosevelt and in 1969 Thomas Bradley, a Black, a former policeman, and an experienced city councilman. Though Bradley charged Yorty with poor leadership and his administration with corruption, and even received a plurality in the primary election, Yorty successfully used racial and communist slurs, talked of crime in the streets and school vandalism, to win reelection.

During his dozen years Yorty was conspicuously absent on numerous world-trade missions, presumably in the interest of increasing tonnage at the harbor, and on social trips to eight sister cities the world around, six of them his own creations. (Federal guidelines limited a city to three.)

Yet during his administration important changes took place other than combined weekly collection of household refuse. With both the economy and the population expanding, improvements came in hiring minority citizens, finding opportunities for youths, and renewing rundown areas. "Are we to accept the argument that anyone has a right to maintain a slum?" Yorty asked. Within eight years he initiated eight urban renewal projects and increased by a third the number of recreational and cultural centers and small parks, plus new police and fire stations to keep up with the subdivisions, especially in the San Fernando Valley and the Santa Monica Mountains. In Griffith Park the new zoo opened, not yet adequately fenced, and animals began to escape.

Yorty pushed the development of an annex to City Hall and an adjacent mall, an attractive, parklike center for noontime shopping, eating at open-air cafes, and sunning. Near downtown the city tore down a declining area and built a convention center.

During the Yorty years, 1961 to 1973, two significant racial outbursts took place, both of them physically violent. During the hot August of 1965 the biggest of United States riots of the '60s took place in southeastern Los Angeles in the Watts district, about two square miles in size and with a population of around 30,000 persons, mostly Blacks. Watts had chronic high employment and no employment agency, three separate bus lines but few automobiles. Its schools were substandard, and the nearest hospital was two hours away by bus. Along the streets were many small storefront churches



and liquor stores. Watts was a small core of classical poverty in a city where since 1950, the Black population had multiplied eight to ten times.

The riot, beginning with a minor police incident, lasted four days and nights and killed 34 persons, injured 1,034, and cost \$40 million in property damage and looting. So many businesses burned on 103rd Street that people called it Charcoal Alley. City police, county deputy sheriffs, and troops of the state's national guard helped to restore order. Liberal and Black city leaders commented that Yorty was a silent, absent non-executive during and after the rioting.

In the city's eastside and in the populous county district called East Los Angeles, one of the biggest Mexican "cities" on earth, Chicanos rioted on August 29, 1970. Twenty thousand militants protested directly against the war in Vietnam, where they felt a disproportionately high percentage of the lives being lost in Asian jungles were those of Mexican-Americans. The Chicanos were indirectly protesting inferior public education, harsh police treatment of Chicanos, and the aloofness of the Catholic Church toward Chicano problems.

During the demonstrations three persons lost their lives, and one of the deaths gave the Spanish-speaking barrio a martyr. When sheriff's deputies shot tear gas into a bar, a shell casing crashed into and killed Rubén Salazar, columnist on the *Los Angeles Times* and news director of a television channel. Salazar had spoken out against under-representation of Mexican-Americans on police forces and on petit and grand juries.

Absent from Los Angeles a total of one year in four, accused of neglecting ethnic minorities, and opposed by the *Los Angeles Times*, Yorty finally lost the respect of too many voters. Even the white-dominated San Fernando Valley disliked his overt racism and his Watergate-like manipulations. It came out that he had converted \$40 thousand in campaign contributions, not taxed, into a personal insurance policy.

In the May primary, 1973, Thomas Bradley defeated Yorty and also three others, including Jesse (or "Jess") Unruh, former leader of the State Assembly, and Thomas Reddin, former Chief of Police. The victory was a triumph for the son of Texas sharecroppers. The electorate was 15 percent Black, but Bradley received nearly 50 percent of the white vote, 51 percent of the brown, and 54 percent of the Jewish. It was the high-income precincts that elected him.

Bradley's election was a turning point in local history, a representative symbol of upward mobility. His parents brought him west in 1924. He attended Polytechnic High School when there were 100 Blacks out of 1,500 students and UCLA when there were 100 Blacks out of 13,000; he ran the quarter-mile on its track team. While serving on the city police force he studied at Southwestern Law School and then passed the State Bar examination. He was the first Black elected to the City Council, which already held an appointed Black.

Standing six feet, four inches tall, Bradley came into office with a steady, quiet zeal to reform and improve city government, to find the best candidates for commissions, to make the budget austere, to cut back on needless public relations and staff use of helicopters, to audit the Harbor Department, improve public transportation, save energy, and rescue a score of blighted,

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*"Los Angeles lives in the present and dreams of its future; San Francisco lives in the present, but dreams of its past."*

Oliver Carlson, 1941

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*"Everyone who has ever been in Los Angeles knows how the mere aspect of things is likely to paralyze the esthetic faculty in providing it with no point d'appue from which to exercise its discrimination, if it does not actually stun the sensory apparatus itself . . ."*

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Edmund Wilson, 1941

neglected communities, including the central city. He worked at getting financial support from state and especially federal agencies.

In April, 1977, Bradley ran for reelection against eleven opponents, including Howard Jarvis, enemy of property and income taxes, and State Senator Alan Robbins, a San Fernando Valley land developer. Robbins accused Bradley of fronting for "downtown moneyed special-interest groups," talked of having the Valley secede from the city, and handed out rape whistles to white female supporters. Bradley won the primary with 59.4 percent of the votes and went on to another term of constructive, dignified leadership that won national attention.

Like Poulson, Bradley responded to the public's — and the newscasters' — obsession with sports. He, too, politicized sports by giving heavy attention to getting the Olympic Games back to Los Angeles. No other modern city had had them twice, but in 1974 he was in Vienna lobbying for the 1980 games, an endeavor that finally, after much time and expense, obtained them for the Orwellian year, 1984. Then came taxpayers' and Councilpersons' protests against public expenditures for Olympic facilities and ultimately an innovative solution, the financing of the Games by an organization of private citizens.

After California voters passed Proposition 13 in June, 1978, Bradley and the Council faced the immediate and the long-term problems of adjusting the treasury and city administration to a large reduction in property-tax income and a new dependence on appropriations from the state. Proposition 13 led to cuts in city services, to user fees, and to increased costs for developers which became higher costs for new homes, at a time when vacancy rates were approaching zero and interest rates were oscillating between 10 percent and 20 percent. The proposition dealt a grievous, many-sided blow to Los Angeles, as it had to other cities, to counties, and to special districts such as those for sanitation and flood control.

The history of Los Angeles during the enormously expansive years from 1950 to 1980 involved matters that lay beyond the control or the powers of mayors and councilpersons. Much of Los Angeles history had become a distraught race in all directions — planners and other nominal leaders, public or private, running to catch up with the migrations of people, the obsolescence of districts, the multiplication of barking dogs, the rise and fall of industries, the spread clear across town of graffiti, the rise of beatniks in Venice in the '50s, of hippies on the Sunset Strip in the '60s, of drag racers in Van Nuys in the '70s, the pervasive spread of hard drugs, the local production of hard-core pornography, the aggressive, public demonstrations of lesbian and "gay" power, and the doings — legal or ethical or neither — of landowners, subdividers, developers, building contractors, and chemical companies.

The multiple pulls of climate, space, amenities, jobs, easy money, technological innovations, and freedom from oppressive government gave Los Angeles demographic enrichments. It also brought mounting social problems. Fundamental trends — even alterations in the natural environment — were underway long before any public official, social scientist, journalist, or historian took notice. Civilized wisdom came in the form of hindsight, not foresight.

Population growth in the 1950s was a world's wonder — from 1,970,348 to 2,479,015. Most of this growth, virtually unplanned, took place in the San

Fernando Valley, where one real estate operator boasted, "We build a city a month here." Walnut, olive, and apricot orchards, fields of spinach and tomatoes, rabbit and poultry farms, became miles and miles of subdivisions, often built so carelessly that the streets of one did not join with those of another. The new arrivals, most of whom came from outside Los Angeles, from all parts of America, were largely Anglos seeking a private home, a lawn, a garden, a pool, a patio, and a two-car garage.

In 1950 the San Fernando Valley was the nation's 25th most populous urban area. Ten years later it was ninth. Lloyd's of London called it "the fastest growing area in the world." During the '60s it became the nation's sixth largest urban area, and a local writer called it "the biggest suburb ever." According to Mayor Yorty, there was more building in the Valley than in Houston, and Houston ranked third in the country.

In 1965 the Valley reached a million in population and was on its way to becoming an apartment center. It held three-fourths of all the swimming pools in Los Angeles. Smokeless factories appeared here and there, in generously zoned tracts, as did churches, shopping centers with a dozen chain stores and parking lots big as hamlets. Schools numbered in the dozens, including some colleges — part of what a booster termed "the knowledge industries."

What happened in the Valley was paralleled in other flatland districts where the city still had open space for subdivision, as in southwestern Los Angeles toward the airport and in the plain extending toward the harbor. A different development took place on both sides of the Santa Monica Mountains, which bisect the plumpest part of the city, and in the foothills that fringe the Valley.

Populating the hills involved expensive bulldozing, grading, and house foundations, often with elaborate retaining walls and pylons. Whether styled individually or built as tract houses within a limited set of architectural variations, hillside and canyon homes were more costly than flatland ones and located relatively far from schools, shops, and services. They were likely to face dangers each fall and winter from wildfire in virgin chaparral or water erosion on denuded slopes.

Over the older parts of Los Angeles, built up decades before World War II, a basic, venerable dispute persisted at all levels of officialdom. Should governments redevelop for homes and the good life, for human values? Or should they redevelop for business and industry, for dollar values? Despite preliminary planning during the war, the predominant point of view came to be the businessman's: short-term solutions that abide by well-known trends, provide plenty of profits, and avoid facing the problems of a large metropolitan disorganization pinioned by a complex of political barriers. Despite the blueprints of planners with an over-all vision, Los Angeles continued to follow what historian Martin Schiesl calls "older patterns of suburbanization and uncontrolled dispersal."

Determined private planners like Victor Gruen saw Los Angeles as a centerless "anti-city," with no points of origin or destination. The city used federal funds to demolish neighborhoods, uproot minority families, put up public buildings, and arrange for office complexes, high-rise apartments, and hotels. A supreme example was the social and physical transformation of Bunker Hill.

In 1949 the city decided on downtown redevelopment and created the

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*"It is often hard to tell  
where the domain of  
the colonic-irrigation  
specialist leaves off  
and a new religion  
begins. . . ."*

Fortune Magazine, 1941

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*"It may be a 'freak,' interesting as such in its place like any play of nature, or this youngest metropolis may have some generic significance, an instructiveness reaching far beyond that of merely a special case, and pointing to future routes of general evolution."*

Richard J. Neutra

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Community Redevelopment Agency, which directed its attention to the two dozen or more blocks of Bunker Hill, the highest elevation downtown. During the Victorian era the hill held the wooden mansions of high society. In due course (between 1910 and 1950) these mansions became boarding houses and hotels, increasingly dilapidated, the habitat of the elderly — and often of winos and hookers. The city's tax collection from the hill was an eighth of what the hill cost it in services.

Machinery soon smashed the once elegant homes and remnant gardens, regraded the slopes, even dug out a streetcar tunnel, leveled the land, and produced new terraces and streets. Then for decades much of the land stood curiously vacant, glaringly dry and weed covered, right into the 1960s.

The first major achievements came at the northern end of the hill, where governments continued building the Civic Center, which became a compact assemblage of more than 30 big office and courtroom structures for all levels of public administration. Prominent among these, crowning Bunker Hill as if it were a modern Acropolis, stood the Music Center: two theaters and an auditorium. By the mid-1970s Los Angeles' Civic Center was more commodious and concentrated than any other governmental complex in any of the 50 states.

During the '70s the southwestern corner of the hill, flattened by earthmovers, became sites for the spacious World Trade Mart and the Bonaventure Hotel, a flamboyant statement by architect John Portman. Perched on lowered hillsides above were several high-rise, high-rent apartment houses and the Security Pacific bank headquarters, 55 stories high. On the east side of the hill, work progressed on a monumental building to house elderly and handicapped persons.

While the Bunker Hill project made its slow headway, companies moved westward from the established downtown business district. The banks and law offices of Spring Street and Broadway and The Broadway department store migrated four to six blocks, to high new quarters amid a new cityscape of office buildings, hotels, restaurants, and interior or underground shopping malls, busy only during daylight hours on weekdays. Atlantic-Richfield tore down its old black-and-gold, "height-limit" skyscraper and replaced it with two Arco 52-story, flat-topped structures, and in 1970 United California Bank went up 60 stories to become the highest building in the city. Anchoring this revitalized western rim of the interior city were solid old institutions for affluent insiders: the Jonathan, California, and Los Angeles Athletic clubs.

Away from downtown, minor financial and business centers grew up, as in the Valley and next to the airport, and major centers came to flourish in the City of Beverly Hills, completely surrounded by Los Angeles, and in Orange County, miles to the east on the Santa Ana Freeway. Branches of the original downtown stores occupied big new shopping centers in prosperous new subdivisions and suburbs, and in these branches suburbanites, lured by ample parking, shopped into the evening hours and on Sundays. The city itself even set up branch city halls and municipal courtrooms in Van Nuys and West Los Angeles.

The most sensational developments of the decades after 1950 came along or near Wilshire Boulevard, which became a many-miles-long corridor of high-rise banks, savings and loans, insurance companies, massive churches, de-

*Los Angeles, August 16, 1965. Sunday serenity in Watts had this appearance — a desolate panorama of destruction through which only firemen, police and National Guardsmen moved. The scene resembled a World War II battleground rather than a peacetime street in the City of the Angels.*





*Los Angeles was not kind to the Chinese. Nineteen were killed in the 1871 massacre, and those who remained after Congress restricted Chinese immigration were largely field hands (photo, 1898).*

## the far east in the far west

Asians were not present at the founding of the Los Angeles pueblo in 1781 but, less than a century later, Chinatown was a thriving community adjacent to the railroad depot. Responding to the discovery of gold and railroad jobs in the north, large numbers of Chinese came to California in the 1850s. While thousands of Chinese constructed the transcontinental railroad, many moved south to link Los Angeles by rail to other parts of the state and the nation. This dramatic improvement in transportation provided a major stimulus for the development of intensive and large-scale agriculture.

Later, Chinese workers helped to build the great aqueduct which brought water to the parched basin. And as Chinese railroad and farm workers looked to Chinatown for refuge between seasonal employment, the segregated ethnic enclave attracted small entrepreneurs who set up stores stocked with dry goods and produce, laundries, restaurants, and entertainments for Angelinos. By the early 1870s, as railroad construction declined and labor organizers accused the Chinese of taking scarce urban and rural jobs, a con-

vergence of racist, nativist and xenophobic demands resulted in legislative and legal harassment. The two hundred Chinese in Los Angeles were not immune, and the rampage of killing and plundering through Chinatown in October 1871 demonstrated that the anti-Chinese movement was not limited to rhetoric.

What happened in Los Angeles mirrored events elsewhere as the Chinese became convenient scapegoats for the state's economic problems. The Chinese were perceived as too successful at surviving under adverse conditions. Somehow they managed to save money to send back to China in spite of low wages, established their own lending institutions because banks denied them loans, and formed associations to mete out justice and for companionship because they were prohibited from testifying in the courts and mingling outside Chinatown. Politicians exploited the anti-Chinese mood and in 1882 Congress passed a federal law totally restricting Chinese immigration.

The labor vacuum created by Chinese exclusion was filled by Japanese workers. Only a few had lived in Los Angeles prior to 1900, but by 1906 the San



Francisco earthquake and economic hardships caused by the Russo-Japanese War led many to seek opportunities in Southern California. By 1910 the settlement now known as Little Tokyo had risen next to Chinatown, and by the eve of World War I many farm laborers had saved sufficient funds to purchase or lease vegetable and fruit farming lands in such outlying areas as Gardena, Beverly Hills and San Gabriel; others entered the wholesale produce and flower markets in the inner city. Their economic success, coupled with Imperial Japan's growing naval strength in the Pacific, combined to reinforce charges that Japanese immigrants were a "Yellow Peril" to the state's economy and the national security.

During the years between the two world wars, Los Angeles' Asian American community also included small clusters of Koreans and Pilipinos, the latter filling the labor pool following the exclusion of the Japanese in 1924. Whatever their land of origin, however, Asian and Pacific Angelinos out of necessity established their own separate self-help organizations in the face of legal, economic, and social discrimination. For Japanese Americans, the Thirties was a particularly grim decade as international tensions heightened between America and Imperial Japan over divergent interests in Asia. Japan's subsequent attack on Pearl Harbor strengthened fears that all Japanese in America — irrespective of U.S. citizenship — could not be trusted. The subsequent evacuation and incarceration in concentration camps emptied Los Angeles and the West Coast of their Japanese populations. Homes, businesses, and careers were lost in the abrupt uprooting, and after the war returnees had to reconstruct their lives with little support from public agencies.

Since World War II, the tapestry of the city's Asian and Pacific communities has been enriched by the influx of new immigrants from the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Uncounted by the census but still discernible are East

Indians, Pakistanis, and Sri Lankans from South Asia; Thais, Laotians, Cambodians, Vietnamese, and Indonesians from Southeast Asia; and Samoans, Hawaiians, Guamanians, Fijians and Tongans from the Pacific Islands. Although they are dispersed throughout the Greater Los Angeles Basin, identifiable enclaves still exist: Koreatown in the central city, Samoans in Compton and Wilmington, Thais and Vietnamese in Hollywood, and recent Japanese arrivals alongside second and third generation Japanese Americans in Gardena. The newcomers, particularly those from former war zones, face enormous challenges in learning a new language, obtaining employment, housing, and education. But there is evidence that they and the children of pre-war immigrants are moving into the mainstream of urban life. Politicians, public servants, judges, television personalities, and skilled professionals carry Asian surnames. Unlike their immigrant ancestors, most Asian and Pacific Americans are no longer confined to segregated sections of the inner city.

The multi-cultural population and landscape of contemporary Los Angeles exhibit an unmistakable Asian dimension. Asian restaurants have become popular and diverse: Mandarin, Korean, Thai, Pilipino, and Vietnamese cuisine now compete with Cantonese and Japanese menus. Fast-food counters dispense "teriyaki-burgers" along with hotdogs and tacos. Landscape gardening, architectural edifices, interior decorating, clothing, and religion all bear witness to the influence of traditional Asian institutions, not to mention the impact of high technology electronics and automobiles bearing the logos of Asian manufacturers. That all this and more are no longer viewed as exotic or alien perhaps attests to a more cosmopolitan attitude.

As Los Angeles enters its third century, the city's culturally pluralistic ambience reflects the influence of Angelinos from Asia and the Pacific.

— Don and Nadine Hata

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*"It is as if you tipped the United States up and all the commonplace people slid down there into Southern California."*

Frank Lloyd Wright, 1940

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partment stores, and office buildings. In 1971, 53 percent of the volume for all Southern California building permits for tall buildings was along Wilshire. Just west of Beverly Hills and south of Wilshire a brand-new subcity, Century City, appeared on 180 acres that once were the Tom Mix Ranch, then a lot for Fox and 20th-Century Fox. In 1961 Alcoa bought the land, in 1963 it dedicated the first building, and in fewer than 20 years Century City loomed as one of the vertical sights in Los Angeles. It held 12,000 firms in a score of towers, 18 banks and savings and loan association, several department stores, 100 shops, 40 restaurants, a theater and movie houses, night clubs, a hotel where Presidents slept, 20-story apartment houses, town houses, and each day thousands of inhabitants, employees, and shoppers.

On Wilshire itself, west of Beverly Hills and the Los Angeles Country Club for a mile or so, a "high-rise, high-class and high-cost territory," condominium structures went up, replacing apartment houses and selling anywhere from a quarter of a million to seven million dollars per unit. Westwood Village, planned by a realtor in the 1920s, now developed a skyline of tall commercial buildings and the largest concentration of first-run motion picture theaters in Southern California, heavily patronized by UCLA students. In 1976 the corner of Wilshire and Veteran Avenue, the western boundary of Westwood, became the busiest intersection in the city, with more than 106,000 motor vehicles per day.

The years between 1950 and 1980 marked a turning point in city history, a period when Los Angeles became a reception and distribution center for the internal movements of Americans and of immigrants from abroad. The Anglos from America who filled up San Fernando Valley were only part of the story. The Southern Blacks who moved to southern Los Angeles, making it the biggest Black city west of Chicago, were another. As new Blacks, generally poor, arrived, middle-class Blacks, freed by court decisions from restrictive covenants and undeterred by a few frontyard bombings, moved steadily westward from Main Street to Western Avenue and on toward Santa Monica Bay, replacing Anglos in handsome tracts, as near the Baldwin Hills. Wealthy Blacks, such as performing artists Nat King Cole and Johnny Mathis, lived at will in affluent districts.

U.S. citizens of Japanese origin, released from wartime concentration camps, and Japanese, never interned, from rural Hawaii, settled here and there. Few of the internees returned to live in the section called Little Tokyo, east of City Hall, an area which, helped by outside capital, became a historic cultural center with restaurants, shops, and a hotel. Thousands of American Indians left reservations or the towns near them to come to Los Angeles for schooling or jobs, making Los Angeles perhaps the biggest of "native American" cities.

Europeans uprooted by the Nazi war, many of them Jews, also made their way to Los Angeles, finding homes and careers in the professions or in business on the liberal West Side, where a massive hospital, Cedars-Sinai, slowly bulked into the sky. During the same decades, changes in federal laws, soldiers' marriages, and special Congressional and Presidential decisions brought on by crises abroad, opened the country and Los Angeles to immigrants from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Greece, Iran, Cuba, the Soviet Union and Lebanon (both a source for Jews and Armenians), from Korea, Thailand,

Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Pacific Islands, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Chinatown, north of City Hall, bulged with new arrivals and boomed with shops, restaurants, and banks. A stretch along Olympic Boulevard, once inhabited by Anglos, then by persons speaking Spanish, became Asian, with signs in Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese. Los Angeles had replaced New York, immigration officials said, as the principal port of entry into the United States.

By far the most numerous group of immigrants remained Spanish-speaking, mostly workers from Mexico, but also from the other nations in Latin America. They clustered in Hollywood and the Valley, but mostly east of the Los Angeles River, and they worked in homes, restaurants, hotels, motels, and garment factories. They also became the merchants and the patrons who occupied Spring and Broadway downtown after the Anglos went westward; those streets became the shopping and entertainment center of a bustling Hispanic subcity crammed with people, Black and Asian as well as brown.

The signs in Spanish and the way of life reminded visitors of prosperous streets in Tijuana and Mexicali. Broadway became the busiest, steadiest, most profitable retail street in the entire city. Theaters that had once made Broadway the stage and movie street for all Los Angeles during the streetcar days before 1950, elegant in facilities, even stunning in architecture and decor, now showed only Spanish-language films or American films with Spanish dubbed in.

In 1950 Anglos dominated in all fifteen City Council districts. Thirty years later Latinos dominated in five districts, but due to divided loyalties determined by nations of origin, they had not achieved substantial political clout. Blacks, who dominated in three districts, had three Councilmen, a fifth of the seats, and in the '70s they gained a mayor and, for a brief time, a county supervisor. The growing, prospering, hard-working, well-educated population of Asian-Americans were also disunited by varied national origins, though one local official, the county coroner and medical officer, was of Japanese ancestry.

During the '70s, a decade of Anglo emigration to adjoining counties, the proportion of whites went down about 20 percent, to about 52 percent of the total Los Angeles population, Blacks went up about 5 percent, to around 11 percent, and Latinos up about 70 percent, to make up about a third of the total population. In the Unified School District, the figures were 41.6 Latino, 26.9 Anglo, 24.3 Black, 6.7 Asian, and 0.5 Indian or Alaskan. Final figures for the 1980 census would portend a more dramatic shift in future political power.

A persistent problem from 1960 on was a steady rise in crime . . . vandalism in schools, burglary in homes, shoplifting in stores, arson in office buildings and factories, rape and murder everywhere, around the clock. In 1971 Chief of Police Edward Davis noted that in its spread and growth in the San Fernando Valley, crime had "changed in its nature from a ghetto phenomenon to a suburban and small town rural phenomenon." By 1980 in some parts of town, poor as well as rich, nearly every house had installed iron grills over all windows. Moreover, police had virtually stopped answering burglary calls, lacking the manpower to cover the incidents. Women's organizations sponsored demonstrations in how to fight off rapists.

In 1970 there were 394 homicides in Los Angeles; in 1979, there were 817, 20 percent more than the year before. (In the United States there were about

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*"The city bakes in an  
amber coastal plain shut  
off from the world by a  
horseshoe of mountains to  
the north, east, and south,  
and by an ocean to the  
westward."*

Paul Hollister, 1940

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*"The city seems not like a real city resulting from natural growth, but like an agglomeration of many variegated movie sets, which stand alongside one another but have no connection with one another. Hardly anything looks as if it had struck roots under the surface."*

Paul Schrecker, 1944

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10,000 homicides and the rate was up 10 percent.) Young men with knives or guns killed at random on sidewalks or from automobiles, and despite efforts by the police forces of city and county to work with youths, gang killings grew dramatically. During 1979 the number of such acts increased 30 percent over 1978, 60 percent over 1977, to a total of more than 250 victims — half of them not even gang members. The captain of the Gang Activities Section of the Police Department told the grand jury that gang homicide victims ranged in age from a 15-year-old youth to a 65-year-old woman who was beaten to death during a burglary. Ancient Rome invited vandals; contemporary Los Angeles was rearing its own.

Like the gangs, which were often directed by middle-aged men, the police themselves faced criticism. A series of cases involved the wounding or killing of suspects while apprehending them, transporting them to jail, or subduing them there. Accusers said the police used unnecessary violence, as in the much publicized case in 1978 of a Black woman, Eulia Love, shot to death after she clumsily threw a boning knife at an officer. Several grand juries recommended improved training of peace officers in non-lethal means of controlling suspects.

Also heating up the years after 1960 was the issue of racial segregation in the public schools. It was an intense social drama involving children, parents, officials, and the courts. The contest was rhetorical, legal, legalistic, and seemingly endless, taking shape in 1963 when the American Civil Liberties Union sued the Board of Education to remedy racial imbalance in two senior high schools, a suit expanded later to include the whole district with its half a million students. In 1970, after prolonged hearings, Judge Alfred Gitelson found *de jure* (intentional) and *de facto* (unintentional) discrimination. School officials had perpetuated, if not created, segregation. Gitelson directed the board to implement a plan that provided a minority enrollment in each school of no less than 10 percent, no more than 50 percent. It was the largest and most extensive program of school integration ever ordered in America. The judge stayed the order to allow appeal.

Five years later the Court of Appeals reversed the decision and the ACLU appealed to the California Supreme Court, which in 1976 upheld the Gitelson decree and ordered the board to prepare a desegregation plan to the degree it could be done "reasonably and feasibly" and submit it to the Los Angeles Superior Court. That court appointed Judge Paul Egly to hear the case. During four acrimonious years Judge Egly conducted hearings, gave orders for mandatory busing, and faced delays and opposition from the Board of Education. In elections for the board, voters, especially those in the San Fernando Valley, gave it an anti-busing majority. In 1980, after further legal tussles between Egly and the board, involving recourse to the Court of Appeals and the State Supreme Court, and a futile board attempt to get help from the U.S. Supreme Court, Egly prevailed. In September, 1980, the schools opened amid a week of legal turmoil, mixed-up schedules, and personal wrangling on the board. Owing to "white flight" to private schools, a shortage of Anglo pupils materialized, but mandatory busing stood as the order of the day.

During the decades after 1950 Los Angeles City College and other community colleges grew in size and number. In 1969 they separated from the Unified School District to be administered by their own elected board, which ran 10 colleges in a district that covered 882 square miles. The one local state



*Hollywood's own man for all seasons was Iowa-born John Wayne. Here the "Duke" portrayed the mythical Sergeant Stryker, fittingly with flag in hand, from the post-war film Sands of Iwo Jima.*

college of 1950, Los Angeles State, divided in 1958 when one part became San Fernando State. Fourteen years later both became universities, Cal State University Los Angeles and Cal State University Northridge. UCLA and USC continued to erect huge buildings and to expand their offerings and student housing. Institutions of higher education heeded the student and ethnic clamor of the '60s, with its repetitious violence and obscenity, and put in courses or departments for minority studies. But even as offerings expanded, standards fell. Professors in all departments increasingly complained that in general students studied less, read less well, wrote more and more poorly — and demanded higher grades. An A seemed to have become a birthright.

Non-academic culture, both elitist and popular, gained in status and flourished. The Hollywood Bowl, faced by a financial crisis in 1951, was saved by the money-raising efforts of Mrs. Norman Chandler (Dorothy Bufum Chandler), who went on during 1954 and 1959 to raise \$18 million from old Los Angeles and new West Side residents for building the Music Center auditorium, later named the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, where symphonies were regularly conducted by such musical luminaries as Zubin Mehta and Carlo Maria Giulini. Opening also in the mid-'70s was a new Los Angeles County Museum of Art, located on Wilshire Boulevard alongside the city's Pleistocene tar pits. With the aid of these new institutions, "civic anxieties subsided as the city narrowed the cultural gap between its myths and realities," according to psychohistorian Andrew Rolle.

Local night spots became nationally important showcases for young talents in all varieties of popular music, even as the city became the leader in the manufacture of cassette tapes and records. Hollywood had conquered Tin Pan Alley.

Similarly, Los Angeles evolved into what it immodestly called itself: The Sports Capital of the World. Achievement supports the claim on all three levels: professional, collegiate, and personal. The Dodgers in baseball, the Lakers in basketball won world championships, and the perfidious Rams won

a title before departing for Orange County. The UCLA Bruins fielded extraordinary teams in several sports, especially basketball, while the USC Trojans dominated half-a-dozen collegiate sports over three decades, most notably football and baseball. In 1962 USC became the first university to win championships in five sports.

Several Olympic champions made Los Angeles their home, while individual Los Angeles residents, weather permitting — which meant most days — participated in great numbers in golfing, surfing, scuba diving, sailing, skiing in the San Gabriel and Sierra Nevada Mountains, flying and parachuting, playing tennis, and jogging — even along business thoroughfares.

Thus in the three decades preceding its bicentennial, Los Angeles flowered and flourished as if in the prime of its transit through modern times. With its new hotels and restaurants and chic shopping centers the city grew even more important as a focus for tourism. Many might come to see things outside the city — the homes of stars in Beverly Hills, Disneyland, animal shows, parades and athletic contests in Pasadena, horse races in Arcadia and Inglewood — but the City of Angels shone at the center.

For Los Angeles, World War II had been a turning point. Once a colonial outpost of the industrial East, a terminus for Eastern railroads, the city became a colonizer and began to generate and ship eastward goods large and small, from the biggest planes and mobile homes to hula hoops and hot tubs. In prestige and influence the *Los Angeles Times* closed on the *New York Times* (which tried in 1962 through 1964 to establish a western edition in Los Angeles). It acquired papers and publishing houses in Texas and New York and ties with the *Washington Post*.

Los Angeles and its peripheral cities came to dominate the production of television shows and radio programs, as it had motion pictures, and the annual spectacles announcing winners of Oscars and Emmies drew worldwide interest.

Like Manhattan, Los Angeles more and more became a headquarters city. Other California cities, Beverly Hills and San Francisco, became the same, yet Los Angeles far exceeded them in aggregate power. It grew to hold the state's second and third leading oil companies (Atlantic-Richfield and Occidental), the state's first three leading savings and loan associations (Home, American, and Great Western, which also ranked as the first three in the United States), the second, fifth, and sixth top banks in the state (Security Pacific, Union, and United California). Flourishing high-ranking firms in manufactures, retailing, air travel, and insurance added to the economic prominence of the city.

Los Angeles had become a technological marvel, a triumph of human ingenuity in many respects, yet it never ceased to be in thrall to the primeval, physical world. During the thirty years between the California centennial and the city's bicentennial, it endured environmental disasters, some natural, some man-made, and some of which made prime time on television. There were torrential, destructive rains in 1952, 1968, 1978, and 1980, leading to deaths and many millions of dollars in damage. In 1963 a dam in the Baldwin Hills burst, with a great loss of lives and homes. In 1971 an earthquake killed 65 in the Sylmar district in the Valley and cracked a dam, requiring evacuation of an entire community.

The 1950s began with a drought, and the worst drought in memory lasted

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"This is indeed a new race. These are the torch-bearers of that new Greek civilization arising on the southwest coast. . . . It is Walt Whitman's or perhaps Bernar McFadden's dream come true."

Lillian Symes

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from 1976 to 1978. There were numerous brush fires in developed hillside areas, the worst being the Bel Air Fire of 1961, which destroyed 437 homes, among them those of prominent doctors, writers, industrialists, and motion-picture celebrities. Yet the great overall problem of the three decades was air pollution. Smog was a problem of "life and breath," day after day, as ineradicable as the common cold, which defied the wishes of the public and the efforts of its officials.

After the World War II, conservation and environmental groups multiplied in number and membership. The Angeles chapter of the Sierra Club grew to 23,000 members, making it the largest chapter of what evolved into a worldwide force. Friends of the Santa Monica Mountains and Seashore, Center for Law in the Public Interest, Ecological Center of Southern California, Los Angeles Conservancy, Friends of Mono Lake, and other organizations worked to save species and scenery, recreational areas, historic sites, entire ecosystems from intrusion or destruction. For saving, as for ruining, the Los Angeles population provided leaders.

In 1979 the Research Department of the Security Pacific National Bank issued a special report, "The 60-Mile Circle," which claimed in superlative terms that Los Angeles, together with its contiguous area, had become a national force of prime importance, impressively stronger than it was at midcentury.

With a radius of 60 miles from Civic Center, the land area of the circle included all of the City of Los Angeles and the most concentrated of the spillover from both city and county. It was a bounty of statistical wonders. The circle held the second largest agglomeration of population, business, and industry in the United States — a population exceeded only by California and five other states, personal income exceeded only by California and three other states, a gross regional product surpassed by only 12 nations, and a per capita gross product greater than that of any nation on earth except, alas, for three small Arab nations that floated on pools of oil.

The 60-mile circle, said the bank, ranked second only to New York in airborne foreign trade, ranked first still as a fishing port, first of course in entertainment, and first as an "aggregation of advanced-technology industries" — meaning electronics, aerospace, oceanography and the other lively frontiers in thought and practical application. The circle housed "the greatest concentration of mathematicians, scientists, engineers, and skilled technicians in the United States." While the Greater New York Area had lost half a million residents since 1970, and the Greater Chicago Area had grown less than 1 percent, Greater Los Angeles had gained more than 8 percent, or 170,000 human beings per year.

Great. Greater. Greatest? The people of the City of Los Angeles, with their spacious, dynamic economy, their multiplying population, the pre-eminence of their institutions and their talented women and men, and their over-riding willingness to accept change as an end in itself — these millions of people faced all the basic problems that the 44 original settlers faced 200 years earlier: problems of natural resources, character, and government. But in 1981 there is a difference. The 2,800,000 of the bicentennial year confront problems of far greater dimensions that have resulted from rate of growth, size, and penultimate success.

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*"Scarcely anywhere have  
I found life more difficult  
than here in this show  
place of 'easy going'."*

Bertholt Brecht

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*Watts Towers*

# Libels and Labels on the Protean city . . . . One Man's Riposte

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Whatever else the year-long celebration of Los Angeles's Bicentennial may accomplish, it will have been worthwhile if it deprives posterity of the notion that Los Angeles has no history and evolution at all, but was created overnight in the 1920s at the command of Cecil B. DeMille, faking God's voice.

History, in the general view, is the one thing Los Angeles has always been thought to have in short supply. At various times it might have produced an abundance of milk, oil, beans, airplanes, custom car bodies and rock music, and even a bit of beer and literature; but it was generally supposed to have no roots, just as its citizens had none. No one would have been surprised, and a good many might have been gratified, indeed, if it had broken away from the continent and slipped into the sea without a trace — except for the peculiar manners and morals with which it had stained and vulgarized the rest of the nation.

Shortly before the Bicentennial celebration began it was mentioned at a small luncheon in the Beverly Hills Tennis Club, and Neil Simon, the playwright, feigned surprise. "Los Angeles is two hundred years old?" he said. "I thought it was only about twenty-two."

He was merely being piquant, of course, like a character in one of his delightful comedies; but his jest does illustrate the widespread belief that Los Angeles was not created by history but by Hollywood art directors; that it is not a legitimate city, but merely an illusion; that Disneyland is not merely a neighbor, but its natural child.

Among the early fruits of the Bicentennial celebration and its outpouring of information was the news — for that is what it was to most Angelinos themselves — that the city was not founded by a delegation of God-fearing Iowa guildsmen led by a high school drum and bugle corps, but by somewhat fewer than four dozen *pobladores* of mixed blood, only two of whom even



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*"Los Angeles is a never-ending phantasmagoria, in Technicolor, with polka dots."*

Matt Weinstock

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claimed to be Spanish. Many people who grew up in Los Angeles annually witnessed the re-enactment of this fateful but humble event by their Anglo schoolmates got up as splendid Spanish soldiers, pious padres and apple-cheeked Midwestern farmers. Even the handsome governor Felipe de Neve himself was represented, marking the occasion with a speech that sought to emulate the brevity and eloquence of the Gettysburg Address.

But in fact, as John D. Weaver has described the scene, "a gray robed friar may have mumbled a blessing and the corporal in command of the three soldiers escorting the colonists may have planted the flag of Spain in the Plaza, but the *pobladores* were probably much too busy with their makeshift wickiups to bother with ceremony. . . . It is doubtful . . . that the California Governor was on hand. . . ." Surely the truth of this episode is much more poignant than the spectacle imagined by the Chamber of Commerce, and more prophetic of the city's racial texture of today.

Not only was our beginning humble, but the adventure in which the growing young city was conquered by the United States of America appears, in the light of the Bicentennial, as more comical than glorious. In fact, the ambitious American officers John Fremont and Robert Stockton took the city in 1846 without firing a shot, and the garrison they left behind was soon ignominiously driven out by the rebellious Angelinos, who dug up a small cannon that had been buried in an old woman's back yard, fired one shot at the American headquarters and demanded that the garrison surrender, which it did. The Americans then marched off toward San Pedro, drums rolling and colors flying.

This is perhaps my favorite battle in history, since it was carried out with high comedy and no loss of life, and it is to the credit of Los Angeles, I believe, that most of the other battles for the city and its environs or approaches were similarly economical in the spilling of blood. In the previous year, Angelino rebels and Mexicans from Monterey had fought a battle at Cahuenga Pass while their womenfolk watched from the hillside, and when it was over, the casualties were one dead horse on one side and one dead mule on the other.

So Los Angeles has no Bunker Hill, no Alamo, no Chancellorsville. Perhaps this is one reason it has been thought of as having no history. To Americans of the eastern seaboard, and even more so to Europeans, Los Angeles appears to have emerged from the smoke bombs of an opera bouffe, rather than the real fires of history. They imagine that it simply oozed up through the unstable earth like some noxious tropical plant, growing and spreading over the plain and sending forth strange fruit to contaminate the rest of the country.

Los Angeles has not been a critical success. It has had almost nothing but bad reviews since Richard Henry Dana looked out over the coastal plain from San Pedro in the 1820s and noted in his journal that he couldn't wait to get on to San Francisco. Since then eastern and foreign pundits have visited Los Angeles in relay, each confirming his predecessors' reports of having discovered an aesthetic, spiritual and cultural wasteland.

Nobody seems to like Los Angeles except those people who, in the view of their friends and relatives, are unfortunate or misguided enough to live in it. The New York movie critic Pauline Kael once wrote that *Casablanca* showed how good a bad motion picture could be. Los Angeles, judging from the

number of residents who seem to enjoy it, shows how good a bad city can be.

The insults directed at Los Angeles in this century would fill a book in themselves, and they have a tendency to be echoed, in variations, by one decade's pundits after another.

H. L. Mencken, the sage of Baltimore, called it "Moronia," and said it "stank of orange blossoms." Half a century later, in one of his plays, Neil Simon had a New Yorker complain that "the whole place smells like an overripe cantaloupe." As John Weaver notes elsewhere, in the 1930s the dyspeptic Westbrook Pegler said Los Angeles should be declared incompetent, like a mental defective, and put in the charge of a guardian, and nearly half a century later the Chicago columnist Mike Royko urged that, with the rest of California, it should be fenced off to protect the rest of the country from its lunatics.

Mencken's epithet, Moronia, has inspired dozens of others, the most durable, perhaps, being Double Dubuque, which also goes back to the 1920s. Since then Los Angeles has been called The Nowhere City, Forty Suburbs in Search of a City (one that is forty suburbs behind the times); Smogville, The Fake Tomato Factory, and Cuckooland — the affectionate contribution of Will Rogers himself, though Rogers astutely applied the same epithet to the entire Republic.

One of the strangest of these recurrent slurs is that Los Angeles has no sense of humor. Now that, of course, is truly an insult. It is axiomatic that even the most secure of persons cannot tolerate the accusation that he lacks a sense of humor, and a journalist who makes the observation that an entire city has no sense of humor might be suspected of lacking one himself.

But we Angelinos are not defensive. In general this perennial stream of invective is good for those of us who live there. We should be gratified that we inspire it, and cherish it as the highest form of flattery, since no doubt much of it springs from unconscious envy. Nevertheless, any visiting journalist who goes away thinking Los Angeles has no sense of humor just doesn't understand its politics, or was looking out the wrong bus window.

How could a city that has no sense of humor have produced Mayor Sam Yorty, who thought he ought to be secretary of defense? And Police Chief Ed Davis, who thought he ought to be governor? And Jerry Brown, who is governor? And the latest of our jests, of course, is that movie actor who thought he ought to be President!

How could people without humor plant plastic trees and flowers along a boulevard because, as one of their leaders explained, "otherwise it would have been barren"? How could people without humor have erected a million-dollar, sixty-foot-high jukebox that was to be the very symbol of the city, like the Eiffel Tower, but turned out to have laryngitis; or abide two-million dollars worth of electric freeway signs that never tell you anything except that it's crowded up ahead, which you can already see, or admonish you to take the bus? Or countenance the Diamond Lane, that hilarious attempt to implement the theory that the best way to ease traffic congestion during peak hours is to cut off one lane?

The fact that Angelinos have enjoyed these diversions as part of their circus, like Aimee Semple McPherson, Hollywood, the University of Southern California football team, earthquakes and tacos, is evidence that they have

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*"Being in Los Angeles is  
not per se blameworthy."*  
Justice William O. Douglas

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*America met Los Angeles  
at the Stage Door  
Canteen, where GIs met  
pretty girls – with or  
without oranges – and the  
future bent west, toward the  
then turbulent Pacific.*



*Getting around the  
spread-out town always  
posed problems for restless  
Angelinos. Here's a novel,  
straight-faced solution,  
c. 1905.*





more to laugh at, and probably do more laughing, than most people who live in big cities in America.

In recent years, however, Los Angeles has come into dubious literary notice as an obligatory locale in best-selling novels that concern the international super-rich, their super-crimes and their super-passions. While Paris, Cannes, London, Athens, Rome and Berlin are the standard settings for this genre, there is usually a gratuitous page or paragraph about Los Angeles, often a bleak little vignette by which the author seeks to evoke the drabness, loneliness and emptiness of life in America, and life in Los Angeles in particular.

It isn't necessary that the hero or heroine is actually in Los Angeles. He may simply conjure up a vision of Los Angeles to make himself feel comparatively lucky to be where he is. In *The Wind Chill Factor*, by Thomas Gifford, a young woman named Paula, who has just come home from Los Angeles, is tending a public library in a small Minnesota town during a blizzard. The temperature outside is forty degrees below zero, and she is telling an old schoolmate what Los Angeles was like: "God, have you ever lived in California, John? It's some sort of updated inferno — highways, overpasses, underpasses, cars, cars, cars, sunshine, smog, the Dodgers and the Rams and the Lakers, drugs, and just unbelievable isolation . . . People do very peculiar things, because they're so insanely lonely. Things you're ashamed of afterward, things that eat away at your sanity when you think about them."

Evidently Paula has fallen into an orgy or two in Los Angeles, which of course is what Angelinos do when they're overcome by the Dodgers and the Rams and the Lakers and that insane loneliness. It isn't really their fault. It's that crazy place. (As it turns out in the novel, people do some very peculiar things in Minnesota, too. Poor Paula is strangled by some mysterious visitor as she sits at her desk in the library, which is deserted because it's too cold for any of the townsfolk to venture outside their doors.)

The author of that book, by the way, was at last report living in Los Angeles, having come out to sign a movie contract for it. He had a martini or two at the Polo Lounge and a drive about Beverly Hills in a studio limousine, and he sent back to Minnesota, or wherever he came from, for his wife.

In *The Domino Principle*, by Adam Kennedy, which also was made into a movie, a young woman named Thelma had gone to Los Angeles while her husband was doing hard time for murder in a Midwestern prison. When he escapes and turns up she tries to tell him what Los Angeles is like: "It's a place where cars live and the people are just there as some kind of servants to keep the cars alive. It's hard to breathe there, too. I mean it. Some days there's a yellow cloud all the way from the ocean clear out to San Bernardino. . . . I mean how can anybody be so crazy about living in a place that they love it even when it's terrible.

"The vegetables and the fruit don't taste good either . . . A California tomato doesn't even taste like a tomato. It tastes like something that somebody invented or made in a fake tomato factory . . . It's all desert, you know. Before they put a town there it was desert. And that's the way it still makes you feel. Like nothing could grow there or live there. For all the fancy buildings and homes and traffic and money and people dressed up and whipping around you get the feeling it's a place to die in, that everything and everybody you see came there to die."

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*"I have seen the future  
and it doesn't work."*

Harrison Salsbury

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*"Los Angeles, more than any other city, belongs to the mass media. What is known around the nation as the L.A. Scene exists chiefly as images on a screen or T.V. tube, as four-color magazine photos, as old radio jokes, as new songs that survive only a matter of weeks."*

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Thomas Pynchon

Of course Thelma's disenchantment may be due in part to the fact that she has committed a minor adultery or two in his absence, and she thinks that if she lays it on about Los Angeles he may forgive her.

One of the reasons visiting writers have a hard time perceiving the real Los Angeles is that, in a sense, it is invisible. Herb Caen, the debonair columnist of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, once flew down to Los Angeles to do an article on it for a national magazine and complained that he couldn't find it.

He had a point. As Gertrude Stein said in one of her more lucid pronouncements, "There is no there there." Miss Stein was speaking of Oakland, we are told, but her comment has seemed to fit Los Angeles even better. Many newcomers to Los Angeles are overcome by a sense of being nowhere, and are inclined to agree that there is no there there.

What they miss, perhaps, is some unique and unmistakable landmark, like those used in movies to set a new locale with one brief picture: Big Ben, the Statue of Liberty, Golden Gate Bridge. But what is the landmark that instantly says Los Angeles?

Our City Hall is familiar enough. One might not expect to find elsewhere a 28-story phallic symbol of vaguely Italian classic, Mayan and Byzantine design, with a Greek tomb at the top, and, on a clear day, a panoramic view of the Los Angeles plain from Century City to the *Queen Mary*. But the City Hall is not always visible to visitors arriving at Los Angeles International Airport, and besides, it resembles too closely the Nebraska State Capitol, at Lincoln, which happened to be designed by the same architect.

What else? On Hollywood Boulevard there is Grauman's Chinese Theater (though its name has inadvisedly been changed to Mann's). Grauman's, as all older Angelinos will always call it, is certainly unique, at least in the Occident, and is known to more foreigners than any other of the city's monuments. But in the eyes of the city's critics, it is acclaimed only as Exhibit A in the case against Los Angeles as the world capital of kitsch. The *Queen Mary* is a kind of landmark, illogical as that may seem for a ship; but unfortunately she has retired from the sea in the horizontal rather than the vertical position, which much reduces her visibility from the land.

New Yorkers seeing the Los Angeles skyline for the first time are prone to say, "You call that a skyline?" But to many Angelinos the cluster of fifty and sixty-story towers erected in recent years by the big banks, hotels and oil companies are objects of some pride, and a reassuring sign that downtown Los Angeles, despite premature reports to the contrary, is not dead.

Even within the memory of most college students downtown Los Angeles once looked like the downtown of any medium-sized Midwestern town, it then being thought that thirteen stories was about as high as a building ought to go on land that lay near a notorious geological fault. But modern structural engineering has challenged that notion, and civic pride and corporate aspirations could no longer tolerate that stubby look. Whether, when the big one comes, the engineers will prove to have been right is one of the uncertainties of life in Los Angeles; but it is one of the peculiarities of the typical Angelino that he doesn't worry much about it.

Curiously, though many of the amenities of Los Angeles are vanishing and its problems are increasing, there is a trend toward its late discovery as one of the world's most energetic, beautiful and promising great cities. More and

*In 1956 building height limitations were lifted and the once stubby City of the Angels soon sprouted a modest skyline.*



more critics of good repute are discovering virtues that are not necessarily new, but which were never before perceived or reported. Oddly, this fresh appraisal comes more often from European critics than from American.

It was Reyner Banham, professor of the history of architecture at University College, London, who called Los Angeles "one of the world's leading cities in architecture;" the late French novelist and diplomatist Romain Gary, a Parisian, described it as "one of the most beautiful and exciting cities in the



*"I have immense respect for Los Angeles, more than a little concern, and sometimes even a trace of affection; but the affection always passes quickly, for I can seldom define it — only, perhaps, at twenty thousand feet, from where Los Angeles seems to be all one place."*

Neil Morgan

world;" and the British writer Jan Morris observed in *Destinations*, her book about great cities, that "every development of Western thought . . . finds its niche, its expression and its encouragement somewhere in this metropolis." Such encomiums hardly appear to refer to Pegler's "slobbering civic idiot" and Mencken's "Moronia."

The fact is, Los Angeles is not easy to praise, define or understand, even for its eulogists. It is hard to get down in words, and hard to photograph, because it has no easily recognizable look: no ancient squares, no medieval alleys, no rows of brownstone houses. It has been built on a spacious coastal plain by a westering people who were bound by no traditions, cowed by no academy of peers or elders and restrained by no entrenched elite. They were mostly young, uninhibited, playful and sometimes gauche, but always energetic and creative. If they were old, and many were, they were looking for something new and better, and they didn't know or care whether it was kitsch or not.

Los Angeles was a place in which an immigrant Italian tile setter could spend thirty years building three fantastic towers out of junk, because he loved America and "wanted to do something big." It was a place where a voluptuous evangelist could go on a romantic escapade and convince her flock that she had been kidnapped, meanwhile engaging the rapt attention of the press and the entire city, and making fools of the district attorney, the courts, and the cops. It was a place where an entrepreneur could build a hot dog stand in the shape of a hot dog or a cafe in the shape of a derby hat without being laughed out of town; where Frank Lloyd Wright chose to scatter his genius on a dozen sites; where Walt Disney made a work of art of an amusement park; where Coca-Cola built a bottling plant that looked like an ocean liner; where a billionaire oilman built a museum that looked like an ancient villa at Herculaneum, and a manufacturer of automobile tires built a factory that looked like a 3,000-year-old Assyrian palace — because they wanted to.

Perhaps Nathanael West's novel *Day of the Locust* has done more than any other work of art to create the vision of Los Angeles as a surreal landscape, a wasteland of false fronts and hopeless dreams. "Not even the soft wash of dusk could help the houses," he wrote of the Hollywood hills. "Only dynamite would be of any use against the Mexican ranch houses, Samoan huts, Mediterranean villas, Egyptian and Japanese temples, Swiss chalets, Tudor cottages, and every possible combination of these styles that lined the slopes of the canyon."

West's people are disenchanted and doomed, but he was right about those houses. They are still there — castles, chalets, pagodas, mosques, miniature Tudors — all constructed of two-by-fours and plaster, like movie sets, and still lived in and cherished by a new generation who believe in make-believe and their own set of myths and dreams.

Angelinos have been despised as worshippers of money, health, sex, surf and sun. They don't really worship these blessings. They simply find them in abundance, and get used to them. They also are addicted to education, music, the theater, baseball, football, auto racing, ballet, tennis, good food, good wine and casual clothing, all of which they also find in abundance, if not always up to the highest critical standards.

There is of course a visible Los Angeles. Even the smog and the depredations of man have not entirely spoiled the natural settings: the lovely beaches,

the visible mountains, the nearby deserts, the hard wild lilac foothills, as Raymond Chandler called them, and the "big dumb ocean" as some petulant novelist recently called the Pacific.

The visible Los Angeles also may be seen in some of the country's most imaginative and beautiful churches, shopping centers, colleges and public buildings, despite a good number of absurdities and blobs; in its freeways, which move traffic better than those of any other large America city, and are works of art, among the wonders of the modern world; in its stadiums and palms and eucalyptus trees, in its mansions and its bungalows and yards; in its boulevards and marinas, and in its scattered wealth of art moderne architecture from the 1920s and 1930s, a collection that is nothing less than a museum and should be a public trust.

All these are visible to the eye of any beholder, whether a native or a Philadelphian. But the Los Angeles that makes its citizens stay here — the answer to the mystery — is invisible. It is composed of space, newness, openness, tolerance, energy, optimism and exuberance, and the possible truth that Los Angeles is simply the freest city in the world.

"To be able to choose what you want to be and how you want to live," Jan Rowan wrote some years ago in *Progressive Architecture*, "without worrying about social censure, is obviously more important to Angelinos than the fact that they do not have a Piazza San Marco." True. There is no Piazza San Marco in Los Angeles. But don't be surprised if you see one here tomorrow.

As for the future, it is hard to imagine a city whose future is less predictable. I myself have no faith in prognostication, especially not about a city whose major shifts of direction have rarely been foreseen.

Who foresaw, in cattle days, what oil would do for Los Angeles? What those crazy fellows with their moving picture machines and their caps on backwards would bring? How the airplane and the telephone would close the distance of a continent, of a world? How four wars would enlarge and change the mixture of its population, bringing hundreds of thousands of young American veterans and displaced persons from Europe and Asia?

What is it now that we can't foresee, even with our computers?

Our seismologists tell us there is one thing we can count on — sooner or later the big one will come.

Most reasonable predictions, except those conjured out of the cosmic stuff by seers, are merely logical extensions of the present, assuming that nothing untoward intervenes. But something untoward always intervenes.

If it shouldn't, though, in the near future, Los Angeles would seem to have trouble enough with its well-defined problems of today. What is to be done about the deteriorating schools, the unemployed Black youths, the rush of immigrants from Mexico and Asia; about pollution, housing, gangs, and wanton crime?

I have no idea.

Meanwhile, all of those ailments, unameliorated, wear away at the city's rare and precious freedom. Yet Los Angeles still has the energy, the brains, the good intentions and perhaps the luck to survive and prosper — even if the big one comes.

Something untoward will surely happen; but something wonderful may happen too.

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*"... this strip of coast, this tiny region, seems to be looking westward across the Pacific, waiting for the future that one can somehow sense, and feel, and see. Here America will build its great city of the Pacific, the most fantastic city in the world."*

Carey McWilliams

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CALIFORNIA HISTORY  
81 Summer

# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

summer 1981





THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, founded in 1871, preserves historical materials and facilitates their use by everyone interested in California's heritage. The Society's publications, programs, and library services seek to stimulate interest in and achieve a wider appreciation and knowledge of the historical events and ideas that continue to shape life in California today. Membership is open to all.

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#### CALIFORNIA HISTORY

Published quarterly: ©1981 by CHS  
Annual membership \$25.00  
Student membership \$15.00  
\$10.00 of each CHS membership is designated for subscription to *California History*

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P.O. Box 3370  
San Diego, California 92103  
(714) 268-8334

Articles for publication, books for review and editorial correspondence should be sent to the Managing Editor, P.O. Box 3370, San Diego, CA 92103. Manuscripts should be typed, double spaced, with notes on separate sheets, and submitted in duplicate with a stamped and addressed return envelope. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of the authors.

LC 75-640289

ISSN 0612-2897

Second-class postage paid at  
San Francisco, California and additional  
mailing offices.  
Publication number 084180

#### COVER

A sampan on San Francisco Bay sometime during the late 1800s. It was between 1850 and 1851 that Chinese immigrants to California founded the state's salt water fishing industry. These Chinese fishermen were important to the business up through the turn of the century. For more of their activities please turn to the article beginning on page 142. *Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, San Francisco.*

# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

PUBLISHED SINCE 1922

VOLUME LX SUMMER 1981 NO. 2

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San Francisco's Greek Colony:  
Evolution of an Ethnic Community, 1890-1945 114  
*by* GEORGE P. DASKAROLIS

Gold Rush Jail: The Prison Ship *Euphemia* 134  
*by* JAMES P. DELGADO

Chinese in California's Fishing Industry, 1850-1941 142  
*by* L. EVE ARMENTROUT-MA

Trenor Park: A New Englander in California 158  
*by* VIRGINIA BELL

Irish Republicanism vs. "Pure Americanism":  
California's Reaction to Eamon De Valera's Visits 172  
*by* TIMOTHY J. SARBAUGH

Pages from the Past—Cheap Living in  
Southern California 186

## REVIEWS

The Kemble Collections 188  
*by* BRUCE L. JOHNSON

Book Reviews 194

Book Notices 200

California Check List 203

# SAN FRANCISCO'S

San Francisco's Hellenic-American community is one of the oldest in the United States. Its roots were planted in the early 1900s when hundreds of youths, mostly single males from the towns and villages of Greece, began detrain in Oakland at the eastern end of San Francisco Bay and taking the ferry to San Francisco's embarcadero at the foot of Market Street. Hundreds more from the Southwest and the Pacific Northwest were also being greeted by relatives or potential employers at the Southern Pacific depot in the southeastern end of the city. A short distance from both ferry landing and train depot stood the cheap rooming houses where they would renew old associations and begin new ones, becoming one of the last European ethnic groups to settle on the West Coast.

As San Francisco's Greek-speaking population increased, it extended its boundaries along Third Street between Harrison and Market Streets in the district called South of Market. For nearly half a century, 1905-1945, this area was to contain the heart of Greek Town, a community of immigrants and their families representing one of a score of ethnic "cities within a city," as well as a central reference point for residents of smaller Greek communities throughout Northern California.<sup>1</sup>

What traces are there of an early Greek presence on the West Coast? How can the origins of a Greek settlement in San Francisco be accounted for? What

traditions, attitudes and skills did the Greek pioneers bring with them? Why did they head west, and how did they interact with the general community?

Greeks in the service of the major global powers were involved in the various phases of discovery, exploration and expansion that led to the eventual settlement of San Francisco. Johann Griego (John the Greek) accompanied Columbus himself on his second voyage.<sup>2</sup> Pedro de Candia (Petros the Cretan) became Francisco Pizarro's commander of artillery in Peru not long before his chief was felled by rebel officers in 1541.<sup>3</sup> In 1598 Juan Griego served with the Oñate expedition that first settled New Mexico. His family included three sons who established residence near Albuquerque.<sup>4</sup>

The best known of the early Greek mariners to visit the West Coast is Juan de Fuca, alias Apostolos Valerianos, a native of the Ionian island of Cephalonia, who served Madrid faithfully as Pilot to the Royal Fleet in the West Indies for over forty years. His one great opportunity to achieve fame and fortune came in 1592, when he was made ship's captain and commissioned to find a shorter route to the East. Fuca sailed as far as 47° or 48° north latitude and discovered the hundred-mile long passage between Vancouver Island and the State of Washington in the Pacific Northwest that bears his name.<sup>5</sup>

It is not surprising to learn that Greek-born subjects also aided Russian expansion to the Pacific Coast. In his excellent study of Russian America, Hector Chevigny refers to the "easy going Greek-born Evstrat Delarof." During the period of the Czar's Alaskan adventure Delarof represented several trading companies, and for eight years (1783-1791) was nominally in charge of all Russian commercial

---

George P. Daskarolis, the son of Greek immigrants, is a native of San Francisco. He holds a doctorate in history from Western Colorado University and is currently an instructor of history at Merritt College, Oakland. This study was made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and is one of the first to closely examine the San Francisco Greek community in over twenty years.



# GREEK COLONY—

operations in the Aleutians and Alaska.<sup>6</sup>

At the time of the California gold rush, a tiny band of Greek-born adventurers joined the thousands who sought out the precious metal. According to the Federal Census of 1850, there were nine persons residing in the state who gave Greece as their country of birth.<sup>7</sup> Ten years later there were eighty-seven additional Greek-born residents in the state, one of whom was a former camel driver named George Caralambo who lived in Los Angeles. "Greek George," as he was called, later acquired some notoriety when the bandit Tiburcio Vasquez was captured at his home in 1874.<sup>8</sup>

Like their compatriots in parts of New England, Greek fishermen were active both inside and outside San Francisco Bay at an early date. A local newspaper's description of the city's fisheries in 1875 stated that "the nationalities of those engaged in bay fishing are represented by Austrian, Italian, and Greek, of whom, perhaps, there are over one hundred constantly at work."<sup>9</sup> In 1887, there were some fifty of them living in the city, all of whom were members of the Italian-dominated Fishermen's Union.<sup>10</sup>

Few early Greek pioneers established permanent roots in San Francisco. They were generally older migrant men, possessed of few skills, whose names were usually Anglicized. Most lived just off the Embarcadero. Many remained unmarried, or married American women and were childless.<sup>11</sup>

California's Greek population continued its slow growth until the period between 1890 and 1910, when it increased from 269 to nearly 8,000, nearly one-third of whom settled in San Francisco. This population increase reflected that of the entire nation:

*evolution of an  
ethnic community  
1890-1945*



*The Nicolas Antipa family photographed  
about 1908.*

between 1899 and 1910 over 216,000 Hellenes entered the United States; more than 4,000 gave California as their destination.<sup>12</sup>

Although the great majority of new arrivals settled along the eastern seaboard, many Greeks headed west to find work, or to escape the ruinous *padrone* system that permeated the large eastern cities, or to be reunited with relatives, or simply because, as one pioneer family member explained, "they couldn't go any farther."<sup>13</sup> San Francisco's reputation as the leading commercial, financial and cultural center west of Chicago obviously stimulated this westward movement.

Many Greeks reached the city after laboring in railroad companies' section gangs, having joined temporary crews that were put to work extending the railway system in various parts of the state and in the Pacific Northwest. Drawn by reports of higher wages, others worked as repairmen, earning up to

fifty cents more for a ten-hour day than their compatriots in Chicago.

In San Francisco, scores of Greek laborers went directly from railroading to the city's car barns. A sizable number of Cretans made up conductor-and-gripman teams on the downtown cable car lines. In at least one instance, a disbanding work gang's foreman-turned-labor-agent persuaded all or most of his countrymen to head for the city *en masse* to obtain jobs with the United Railroads, corporate owner of nearly all of the city's street railways after 1902.<sup>14</sup> Having outlived their usefulness as strikebreakers, scores of Greek youths came to the Bay Area to escape the violence-scarred mining regions of Utah and Colorado.<sup>15</sup> At a time when ever larger numbers of Greeks were willing to go wherever there were jobs, the construction boom that followed San Francisco's catastrophic earthquake and fire drew hundreds more to the city.<sup>16</sup> More than 1,600 reached California in

Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos  
meeting with members of the Hellenic  
Liberal League at the Fairmont Hotel in  
December, 1921.



*This photo was taken shortly after the completion of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in 1907. Situated at Seventh and Harrison Streets near the heart of Greek Town, it remained the Greek community's religious headquarters until the 1920s.*

1907 alone.<sup>17</sup> First arrivals sent for relatives or compatriots from the same town or village.

Many of those Greeks who arrived in the San Francisco Bay Region during the 1890s and early 1900s came from three areas: the village of Kyparissi on the east coast of the Peloponnesus; the village of Ysternia, on the island of Tinos of the Cyclades chain; and the port town of Galaxidi, in central Greece. There were also several from the island of Cephalonia and from Laconia, in the southern Peloponnesus.<sup>18</sup>

Even prior to 1890, more Greek residents could be found in the city's South of Market district than in any other sector. It was an old district, containing growing numbers of hotels, boarding houses, restaurants and one-third of the city's pawnshops, charities and missions, all of which testified to its increasingly working class population.<sup>19</sup>

The South of Market district's working class character was retained after the earthquake and fire of 1906. The entire area was rebuilt within three years, even as many of its 65,000 residents moved into the adjacent Potrero Hill and Mission districts to the south and west, while those who could afford it joined the exodus to the newly emerging Richmond and Sunset districts even farther west.<sup>20</sup>

It was "south of the slot" (so named because of the cable car slot that ran along Market Street) that scores, then hundreds of young, unskilled agrarians came to seek their fortunes. They found their first job opportunities with such industrial firms as American Can and the San Francisco and Pacific Glass Works, while from its offices at Fourth and Mission Streets the Union Iron Works sent hundreds more to its twenty acre site at Hunters Point, then one of the largest and most complete shipyards in the United States.<sup>21</sup>

In a city as commercially diverse and expansive as San Francisco, the opportunities for economic ad-



vancement must have seemed virtually unlimited. As erstwhile laborers and peddlers began opening small dry goods stores, cafes, coffee houses and candy stores, a Greek-oriented business district sprang up in an area bounded by Market, Harrison, Third and Fifth Streets. By 1910 there were enough Greek-owned businesses, particularly along Third and Folsom Streets, to provide jobs for compatriots as dishwashers and janitors.<sup>22</sup>

San Francisco's commerce and trade appealed to the Greek immigrant. Business ownership was a source of pride, financial independence and proof of success. It also provided wider contact with the general public, accelerated the process of Americanization, and helped determine the leadership and direction of the Hellenic community and its various institutions.<sup>23</sup>

By the mid-twenties, San Francisco's business establishments included hundreds of Greek-owned and operated restaurants, groceries and shoe shine stands.



*Nicholas and Helen Athanasiadou Damianakis riding in the Berkeley hills in the 1890s. Nicholas became a charter council member of Holy Trinity Church and business leader, while Helen formed one of the earliest Greek women's organizations in the United States. Their six children became the first fully university educated Greek-American offspring in the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Damianakes home was the site of numerous cultural events.*



In 1927, the Associated Greek Press published a "Greek Business Guide and Directory." Its listings reveal the extent to which the city's Greeks had entered the business world, ranging from auto repairmen and bank representatives to taxicab and theatre owners and upholsterers, as well as nearly two hundred cafe and restaurant owners.<sup>24</sup>

Greek Town produced several business success stories: the Molaikides brothers built the Golden

Brand Bottling Company; A. K. Thanos operated his own liquor distributorship; the Fotenos Brothers wholesale butchers was one of at least three that were begun in the vicinity of Third and Folsom Streets; Nick Daskarolis became known as the produce district's "onion and potato king" in the 1930s; the Sarantitis brothers operated the Golden West Bakery; and George Christopher's dairy company became a major supplier in the 1940s.<sup>25</sup>

Among the earliest Greek-owned enterprises that expanded far beyond the colony's boundaries was Kockos Bros. wholesale grocers which claimed a five million dollar gross in 1920, with outlets in Cuba, Canada, China and Japan during World War I.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, the city's Greeks remained essentially small, family level entrepreneurs. There were to be virtually no chain store operations, large corporate structures or extensive real estate holdings controlled by local Greeks. Whether they lacked vision or resources or both is arguable. They undoubtedly suffered from disunity and mutual recrimination. Many complained bitterly of being exploited by their own kind, while others loaned their meager funds too freely to compatriots. Their children entered the professions or staffed business firms owned by others. Several pioneers had no heirs; two-thirds of the coffee house owners, for example, were childless. Few widows carried on the family business after their husbands passed away.

**P**rior to 1903, when the colony's first church was opened for worship, the city's Greeks had to rely upon the Russian Orthodox clergy for their religious needs. A "Graeco-Russian-Slavic" Society was established in 1864, and in 1868, the Society petitioned the Consistory of Alaska to send a priest. A Father Kovrigin arrived some time afterward, a parish was organized, and in 1871, St. Alexander Nevsky became a cathedral (now known as Holy Trinity Russian Cathedral).<sup>27</sup>

From the evidence available, no independent Greek parish existed in San Francisco before the mid-1890s. Between 1894 or 1895 and 1903, Greek Orthodox worshipers congregated in a hall on Rincon Hill near the present western terminus of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.<sup>28</sup> In 1903, several

parishioners, including a remarkable man named Alexander Kosta, called a general meeting to discuss the purchase of a permanent church site. Soon afterward, they had raised \$2,500, largely through Kosta's efforts.<sup>29</sup>

Once the site — a lot on Seventh Street, near Harrison, along the southern boundary of Greek Town — was selected, construction began at once. After the structure was completed, simple furnishings installed, and election of officers held, the necessary articles of incorporation were recorded with the county clerk's office, and the Greek Orthodox Community of the Holy Trinity Church became a reality. It was the eighth Greek Orthodox religious community established in America.<sup>30</sup>

The church edifice was destroyed during the conflagration of 1906, but several items, including the Log Book and baptismal font, were saved. In the interim the Kosta home, located in the Richmond district a few miles northwest of Greek Town, served as a temporary church and boarding house.<sup>31</sup>

Following a broader fund-raising campaign, during which compatriots in several surrounding communities were approached for assistance, work began on a second church building not far from the original site in the fall of 1906. The church was completed the following year, and a Greek-language school was opened in 1912.<sup>32</sup>

For several years Holy Trinity church served as a religious headquarters for the Greek Orthodox faithful of the entire Bay Area. Its priests, all of them energetic and dedicated men, were kept busy administering to the needs of Orthodox Christians as far away as Fresno, Sacramento, and Redding, especially during the major religious celebrations climaxed by Easter services. In one historical sketch of the Sacramento community, there is mention of the appearance of the Reverend Makaronis, Holy Trinity's third priest, during the Holy Week in 1910:

"He rented a warehouse or a hay loft on 12th and K Streets. He cleaned the place and then conducted services. . ."<sup>33</sup>

Another local priest, Archmandrite Kallistos Papageorgopoulos, later was elevated to one of the four episcopates of the American Archdiocese, and in 1927 became the city's first resident Greek Orthodox bishop.<sup>34</sup>

The close relations between the colony's residents and their church were challenged constantly by the problems of growth. The community's expansion was speeded following the return from Greece, at the conclusion of the Balkan Wars, of hundreds of volunteers, many with wives and families. A growing number of parishioners complained that the community's progress did not seem to keep pace with its numerical growth. To make matters worse, a serious political power struggle in Greece between the republican followers of Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos and the royalist supporters of King Constantine II had a divisive impact upon the Greek colony that would last for over twenty years.

Dissatisfaction increased. The grumbling became louder, until a "reform" faction managed to force the calling of a general assembly at the Civic Auditorium in 1916. Over 3,000 persons heard a score of speakers decry the situation, several demanding a larger church and a parochial school, after which the majority of those eligible voted to remove the board of trustees.<sup>35</sup>

The church community's squabbling continued until 1921, when a dissident group, overwhelmingly Venizelist, broke away, and after congregating for several years in a building at Hayes and Pierce Streets, purchased and refurbished the Valencia Street theatre building in the upper Market Street sector approximately two miles northwest of the Holy Trinity church. There Saint Sophia's church was opened in 1927.<sup>36</sup>

The Valencia Street community faced financial difficulties from the beginning of its nine-year existence. Church attendance did not increase sufficiently, so that the weight of a heavy mortgage became unbearable following the general economic collapse of the early 1930s. In 1936, when the congregation's debt stood at \$65,000, the church property was sold to a capital company owned by the Bank of Italy for \$22,000. The community later arranged to rent the building for \$100 a month.<sup>37</sup>

With the arrival of Father Basil Lokis, former assistant pastor of Holy Trinity, the Valencia Street community's fortunes improved rapidly. Lokis had attempted to unite the two congregations in order to facilitate the expansion of community activities and establish the Bay Region as worthy of a resident bishop — hopefully, Lokis himself. But the dynamic young priest's proposal was turned down by the Seventh Street congregation during a tumultuous meeting, and the following Sunday Lokis publicly and dramatically announced his resignation. Following a series of legal maneuvers during which Lokis was barred from entering the Holy Trinity church by court order and new parish board elections were ordered held, Lokis was persuaded to join the Saint Sophia community.<sup>38</sup>

Under Father Lokis' leadership the Valencia Street community was reorganized and named the United Greek Community of the Annunciation. The parish council subsequently was able to repurchase the church building for the original auction price, and, with the onset of an economic boom during the wartime forties, the community prospered.<sup>39</sup>

Although the two church communities remained divided, one of their common goals was realized in 1935, when the Greek Orthodox Memorial Park was opened in Colma, a small town south of San Francisco. Following passage of an ordinance by San Francisco's Board of Supervisors prohibiting all





*Demetrios Velliseratos in his Cliff House store with his nephew Costa around 1911. The Velliseratos' were among the earliest Greek families to operate several Ocean front cafes and other food outlets in the early 1900s.*

further interments within the city and county limits after August 1, 1901, several cemeteries had been established just beyond the city's southern boundary. In 1924, the fourteen associated cemeteries then in existence proceeded to incorporate the area into the town of Colma.<sup>40</sup>

Angelo and Athanasia Pouloupoulos had acquired some acreage on the west side of El Camino Real, the main artery between San Francisco and points south prior to the construction of a major freeway in the 1950s. In order to retain possession of the land, the Pouloupoulos sold shares to a number of compatriots, and deeded the property to the Greek Memorial Park in 1934.

The Pouloupoulos had befriended Nick Doukas, a transplant from Greek Town who operated the only restaurant in the vicinity. Doukas eventually bought out all but two of the original shareholders and

purchased additional acreage in 1955. By 1970 the park's tombstones bore the names of over 3,500 people, a number greater than San Francisco's entire Greek colony in 1910. Some 800 additional Greek immigrants, including Nicholas Antipa, are buried across the roadway in the "Greek plot" at Olivet cemetery.<sup>41</sup>

The rapid growth of the San Francisco Bay Region and the presence of an established Russian Orthodox church helped speed the formation of a major religious community in Greek Town whose strengths and weaknesses reflected those of the larger Greek colony. The laypersons and priests involved in its origins and growth were able and energetic individuals who could not overcome the personal attacks that divided the community and alienated many of its members. Because of the factionalism and personality conflicts that developed, the possibilities for self-



George Pappageorge-Palladius (left) and Alexander K. Pavellas (center) outside the Prometheus newspaper office on Third Street, with an unidentified compatriot. Prometheus may have enjoyed the largest readership in the Greek Colony's history, claiming a circulation of 12,000 in 1925.

Angelo T. Mountanos (center forefront) celebrates the opening of the California newspaper's new press in 1927. At his right are various members of the Mountanos family, including his young son Angelo, who began broadcasting a Greek language radio hour in 1948. At Mountanos' left is Mayor James Rolph, Jr. Father Constantine Tsapralis (with crucifix) was the colony's first and most durable regular pastor.



enhancement on the part of one united community as opposed to two communities going their separate ways will never be known.

**T**he Greek-language press played an important role in the life of the Greek colony. Several Greek-owned newspapers appeared between 1905 and 1945, the first being *O Eiriniikos* (The Pacific). It was founded in 1905 by Michael Antonakopoulos and published in partnership with Alexander K. Pavellas for several months until Pavellas became sole owner.<sup>42</sup>

Pavellas' newspaper operation survived the 1906 fire, and in 1911 he became a naturalized citizen. By then he had married Lucille Harpending, whose twin sister Genevieve was later to marry Pavellas' business partner. After a three-year residence in Greece, the Pavellas returned to San Francisco with their infant son, Constantinos, and Pavellas was appointed Acting Consul General of Greece and commissioner in charge of the Greek exhibit at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. The following year he resumed publication of the newspaper, now known as *Prometheus*, with a new partner, George Pappageorge-Palladius. In 1919 their publishing company issued a largely pictorial introduction to Northern California's Greek communities entitled *The Hellenic Colonies in the Western States of North America*.<sup>43</sup>

*Prometheus* may have been the most widely read weekly in the Greek colony's history, claiming a circulation of 12,000 in 1925.<sup>44</sup> At the time it included in its eight-page format entire sections devoted to international, national, regional, and local affairs, as well as a "Los Angeles Edition." Its pages were filled with poems (several of them composed by Lucille and Constantinos), anecdotes, and announcements of

baptisms and weddings, with advertisements ringing the edges.

In 1907 *California*, the only Greek-language newspaper to outlast *Prometheus*, began publication under a three-member management before being taken over by Anastasios T. Mountanos. *California* began as a standard-size, four-page weekly. Like *Prometheus* it included a wide range of news, from local to global, with the usual emphasis on matters pertaining to the *Patrida* (Fatherland).<sup>45</sup>

*California's* evolution during its first quarter century reveals a great deal concerning San Francisco's Greek colony, the most striking during its early years being the amount and frequency of reported criminal activity, ranging from fraudulent actions of various kinds to assaults and killings. In its descriptions of personal squabbles over partnerships, accusations involving cheating at cards and lying under oath, and reporting of false bankruptcy claims, Mountanos' weekly seemed determined to expose the Greek community's hoodlum element.<sup>46</sup>

As the Greek colony expanded and several new businesses were opened along its central streets, *California's* news content underwent a noticeable change. Its advertising became more sophisticated, with additional professional listings. Reporting of crimes was minimized while several columns were devoted to family activities. In short, *California* reflected an ethnic community's search for stability and respectability.

Both *Prometheus*' and *California's* editorials stressed the need for closer coordination of organizational activities, called for the construction of a parochial school and community center, and supported greater community involvement in civic affairs. Both Pavellas, an ardent Venizelist, and Mountanos, who backed the royalist cause, were ardent nationalists. Although they were entirely different personalities, they agreed on one essential: until the Greek colony





*Wedding photo of Vivian Stratis and Costa Vellis taken in 1927. At the right is the coumbaro, or best man, John Velliseras, who became an executive with the Hunt Foods corporation.*

could agree on its major goals and direction, progress would occur haltingly. To some extent their predictions ring true today. San Francisco is still without a Hellenic-American community center where all age groups can spend time profitably in athletics or visits to a library or museum devoted to the preservation of the city's Greek heritage.<sup>47</sup>

**F**or the Greek pioneers of both sexes home, church, and Hellenic tradition were the chief sources of strength, unity and pride. Although the difficulty of pronunciation and the discrimination of the time constrained some immigrants to Anglicize their names, that pride remained. It helped to justify the sacrifices made during the years of painful adjustment and trial.

Although their work days were long and often

financially unrewarding, the many feast days and family celebrations lightened the Greeks' burdensome routine. The Eastern Orthodox faith revolved around the miracle of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection, so that Easter was by far the colony's most important holiday. It was preceded by week-long religious services, and was followed by hours of feasting on roast lamb, wine, and the traditional colored eggs for cracking. A large lot in back of the Cosmopolitan Market on Third Street served as a central gathering place, where hundreds sang and danced the kalamatiano, tsamiko and hasapiko.<sup>48</sup>

The daughters of the colony's immigrants faced a more restrictive existence than their brothers. They were expected to set the best example and help with the housekeeping duties. Vivian Stratis Vellis, whose father was the Holy Trinity church's cantor, lived for several years on Cleveland Street in back of the church. Her weekly routine revolved around household duties, school, and church-related functions, all of which she later recalled warmly.<sup>49</sup> Anna Milonas Loutas benefited from being exposed to her father's beverage business, later applying her practical experience as an officer in various women's organizations.<sup>50</sup> Few women of her generation had such exposure.

Family relationships were often made difficult by arranged marriages, with a great age disparity between the sexes, and the inequality inherent in a rigidly observed male supremacy. Such marriages led many Greek women to dedicate themselves to their children who became their hope for the future. A few better educated women married activists who encouraged them to participate in community affairs. Others were widowed while still young and became involved in church and other activities or simply used such outlets as substitutes for unworkable marriages. The Greek colony's first American-born generation experienced a changing environment and new ambitions followed by great disillusionment during the

Great Depression. During the interwar period (1919-1939) a sizable number of Greeks moved to the Richmond and Sunset districts on the city's western fringe, where new, affordable housing was being constructed. The new neighborhoods, with their middle-class residents and college preparatory high schools, broadened the new arrivals' horizons.<sup>51</sup>

Peter Tamaras' experiences are fairly typical of those who matured between the two world wars. His parents, William and Melba, had saved \$8,500 while operating a tailor shop not far from the flat in which they lived with their three children, and in 1922 the family moved "stavenoos," as the older Greeks called the numbered avenues of the city's western sector. Peter, the oldest of three sons, attended Lowell High School, then entered the University of California at Berkeley in 1929 — barely one month prior to the stock exchange's collapse and the

beginning of the most severe economic crisis in the nation's history. Peter managed to make ends meet while at Berkeley by working at odd jobs and busing in a San Francisco cafe on weekends.

The depression-aggravated anxieties of the 1930s caused a deeply troubled younger generation of Greek Americans to reassess the rising expectations of the previous decade. Young Tamaras, who had majored in international relations, took any job he could find, eventually landing a wrapper's position with a furniture company that paid seventy dollars a month. The call to military service during World War II ended the most trying period in his life, but not his association with the South of Market district. After his discharge from the service in 1946, he opened a janitorial supplies service, and, after trying out two locations, reopened for business on Harrison Street. Close by stood the church, the elementary



*World War I veterans of Battery "B," 347th Field Artillery are feted at a welcome home banquet at the Preovolos brothers' Imperial Grill in April, 1919. Peter Preovolos, his wife Kalliopi, and their son John are at the counter.*

school, and the other familiar landmarks of his youth.<sup>52</sup>

As their numbers grew, the city's Greeks began forming various organizations that were eventually to range from local societies to national fraternal orders. The earliest and most durable mutual aid association was the Hellenic Mutual Benevolent Society, which was established in 1888 and served as a model for later organizations, both locally and in other Greek communities in California. The Society provided sickness and death benefits for its members as well as financial aid for those who wished to be repatriated. Its members contributed often to the destitute of Greece: orphans, earthquake victims, and refugees from Asia Minor during periods of increased Turkish hostility were among the chief recipients. They also displayed a fervent loyalty to the motherland in their support of recruitment drives during the Balkan Wars.<sup>53</sup>

Several additional organizations became active between 1909 and 1912. The Panevoikos Society was the first composed of immigrants from a specific region, in this case the island of Euboea, off the Attic coast. Following a brief interruption in organizational activity due to the departure of hundreds of volunteers to fight the Turk and later the Bulgar (1912-1914), the number of local societies increased rapidly. The Accadians, Samians, Cefallonians and Thessalonians led the way, followed by Cretan, Messinian, Macedonian and Laconian groups, all of whom sought to preserve their regional identity within the Greek colony.<sup>54</sup>

The first women's club, the Union of Greek Women, was established in 1913, but women's groups did not achieve prominence until the late 1920s, when the Greek Ladies Brotherhood Progress

(Proodos) and the Daughters of Penelope were organized. As founder and presiding officer of the Union, Helen Athanasiades Damianakes (1869-1939) indicated the direction that succeeding women's groups would follow. She supported the idea that women should serve as auxiliaries, helping to raise money for various projects not undertaken by their male counterparts rather than pursuing an entirely independent course. Two of the Union's major fund-raising campaigns were for a tuberculosis sanitarium and for the Greek victims of the Balkan Wars.<sup>55</sup>

The mother lodge of the Daughters of Penelope was formed in San Francisco in 1929 under the leadership of Alexandra Apostolides Sonenfeld, the daughter of a priest. Her first husband, Dr. Emmanuel Apostolides, was a charter member and vice president of AHEPA, a national fraternal organization that was experiencing phenomenal growth. Together they decided to form a Senior Women's Auxiliary, invited several women to their home, and persuaded them to join what was to become the most influential Hellenic-American women's group in America.<sup>56</sup>

The Daughters' purpose was to enhance the spirit of Hellenism within an American framework. Its members supported a gradualist approach to Americanization. Their constitution was printed in both languages; their Order's colors were the blue and white of Greece; their officers were required to read passages from Homer at the conclusion of each meeting.<sup>57</sup>

Some years after the Order was established, Sonenfeld recounted those accomplishments for which she felt the Daughters "are humbly and deeply proud:" the Penelopian Home in Athens, a sort of halfway house for young women from outlying areas in search of work; the Order's financial assistance to various orphanages in both countries; and a generous



scholarship program.<sup>58</sup>

Both the Daughters and Proodos became involved in educational and cultural activities aimed at bridging two lifestyles. Their philosophy and methods reflected an attempt to reach a compromise between Old World tradition and "100 per cent Americanism," with the Daughters favoring the latter.<sup>59</sup>

In time the Greek colony's organizational activity was to include a Hellenic music club, founded in 1909, student groups, athletic clubs and even a workers' society, "Spartacus," which had a brief existence in 1935.

The need for greater coordination of the various organizations' endeavors led to the formation of a central coordinating committee, the United Hellenic American Societies of San Francisco (UHAS) in 1940. Until that year the annual independence day celebration commemorating the date, March 25, 1821, on which the first major uprising against the Ottoman Turks occurred, was undertaken by individual communities or societies. The central committee was made a permanent legal entity in 1946, following a series of highly successful commemorative affairs at the Civic Auditorium.<sup>60</sup>

America's involvement in two world wars had a powerful impact on San Francisco's Greeks. While the first global conflict speeded their Americanization, the second confirmed it, making possible a political success story that might have been unthinkable a short time previously.

An intense nationalism marked by a hyperpatriotism and a growing suspicion of alien cultures grew out of the First World War, compelling many local Greeks to reconsider their citizenship status. Scores of young males obtained their papers through enlistment in the armed services, some of them later forming the first Greek-American Post of the American Legion to be established in the United States.<sup>61</sup>

Probably the first postwar organization to serve as a link between the city's Greeks and the wider community was the Order of Klossa, a secret society formed in 1923 for the purpose of furthering a more positive image before the general public. The Order's leaders stressed proper grooming and a "progressive" attitude on the part of its membership, which was restricted to those who could afford a high initiation fee, possessed full American citizenship, and had good character references. A highlight of Klossa's social calendar was the annual ball held at the Fairmont Hotel which formally attired guests attended by invitation only. Although its members assisted the destitute, Klossa's primary *raison d'être* was the desire to develop a more dignified and sophisticated nucleus within the Greek Colony.<sup>62</sup>

One year after the Order of Klossa came into being, a group of Greek business and professional men gathered in one of the upper rooms of the Civic Auditorium. There they formed the Greek-American League, the first Hellenic-American political organization in the city's history, whose goal was to convince the community at large of its members' loyalty and patriotism and to promote a greater political consciousness on the part of the Greek community by means of banquets, meetings with elected officials, and participation in parades and rallies.

League activity reached a peak in 1925, when it held a banquet at the Fairmont Hotel for an estimated five hundred guests and sponsored a float as part of a mammoth parade in celebration of California's Diamond Jubilee.<sup>63</sup>

The Greek colony's war veterans often proved to be among the most energetic and ambitious of the early activists. Probably the most prominent was George Peterson-Cherakis, an Accadian who came to San Francisco in 1915 and served an apprenticeship in a candy store before enlisting in the California "Grizzlies," as the 144th Artillery Unit was called.

*Spyro Skouras, who became head of Twentieth Century-Fox the following year, appeals for support of the Greek War Relief Fund at a meeting in 1941.*

*Greek Consul General Elias Picheon is flanked by Julia Antipa Petterson and his wife Calypso Picheon following the christening of the S.S. John Constantine in July, 1943.*

He returned to the city after the war and established an insurance brokerage business.

As founder and commander (1921-1924) of the Greek-American Legion, later known as Hellenic Post 230 of the American Legion, Cherakis exerted some influence at both the local and state level, claiming as personal friends such political figures as Mayor James Rolph, Jr.<sup>64</sup>

The best illustration of the Greek colony's shift toward American interests after World War I is the rapid rise of the local AHEPA lodges beginning in the late 1920s. The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association was founded in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1922. Thoroughly middle-class, business and professions oriented, and extremely patriotic, its members dedicated themselves to "Americanization, assimilation, and adaptation."<sup>65</sup> The social and economic climate of the 1920s encouraged AHEPA's rapid growth from the South and Southwest to the North and West. By the mid-1930s it was the nation's most influential Hellenic-American fraternal order, with branches all across the country.

Between 1926 and 1929 two AHEPA chapters were organized in San Francisco. As first regional Supreme Governor, George C. Peterson (as Cherakis was known then) once again became the principal catalyst, carrying on a recruitment drive that produced twenty-two new chapters in Northern California during his first term.

In 1931 the two lodges hosted the ninth annual national convention. The resultant publicity encouraged additional growth, so that by the mid-1930s they claimed over 1,000 members, making AHEPA the Bay Area's most powerful Hellenic-American organization.<sup>66</sup>

Their experiences with such organizations as the Greek-American League and AHEPA encouraged a nucleus of community activists to seek city-wide office. In 1929 Dr. Peter Angel (Angelopoulos) was



persuaded to run for supervisor. His involvement in virtually every facet of community activity, knowledge of English, and college-level educational background made him an obvious choice. He was a charter member of the Order of Klossa, the Hellenic Post, and the Pacific Coast chapter of AHEPA, as well as a trustee in Saint Sophia's Church.<sup>67</sup>

Running on the slogan "Put an Angel on the Board of Supervisors" and supporting construction





of the War Memorial Building, Dr. Angel managed to place fifteenth in a forty-nine candidate field.<sup>68</sup>

When George Christopher ran for the same office sixteen years later, Peter Angel was his campaign manager. The timing of the Christopher campaign was excellent. The Greek-American community had supported every aspect of the American war effort, and had been vindicated by the Greek army's courageous stand against both Italian and German invaders in 1940-41. Although serious divisions remained, San Francisco's Hellenic community seemed more prosperous, confident and united than at any time in its history.

George Christopher had first entered the political scene in 1934, when he ran as a Democrat for the state assembly seat held by Tom Maloney, a popular veteran incumbent, and was beaten easily.<sup>69</sup> He had left Galileo High School in his freshman year due to the untimely death of his father and gone to work for

the *San Francisco Examiner*, first as a copy boy and then in the accounting department. He received his degree in accounting from Golden Gate College after nine years of evening classes and found work as a bookkeeper for a number of Greek-owned businesses during the depression. In 1939 Christopher bought a Fillmore Street dairy for \$3,000. Six years later, having achieved some economic security after surviving a series of legal and financial battles, he decided to run for local office. Christopher's enormous energy and personal appeal, certain key endorsements, and virtually unanimous Greek voter support enabled him to join two other newcomers on the Board of Supervisors, barely taking the fifth and last contested seat with slightly over 49,000 votes.<sup>70</sup> Four years later he was to be reelected by the largest vote ever accorded a supervisory candidate, receiving more than 179,000 votes.<sup>71</sup> In 1955 he would take office as the first Greek-American mayor of a major American



city. As one Christopher supporter put it, "We Greeks had arrived."<sup>72</sup>

The Second World War provided the psychological and economic foundation for the Greek community's active participation in the city's politics and government. The successful Christopher supervisory campaign of 1945 was a fitting climax to the Greek experience during World War II. The members of San Francisco's Hellenic community contributed invaluable services both to the nation's war effort and to programs aimed at Greece's survival and postwar rehabilitation. The war also speeded their assimilation into American society, and most emerged from the war with a strengthened appreciation of their American and Greek roots.

An important turning point for the city's Greeks was their homeland's courageous stand against both Italian and German invading armies in 1940-1941. The Greek armies' stout resistance was a source of immense pride to Greek-Americans throughout the United States. Up until that time the issue of Greece's questionable loyalties, one that dated back to the republican-royalist power struggle during World War I, had remained unresolved. That shadow had been darkened further by the existence of a fascist-like dictatorship in Athens under General John Metaxas, who had assumed power in 1936. The Greeks' bravery removed that shadow forever. America's Greeks were filled with a sense of satisfaction they had never felt before, and they reacted accordingly.<sup>73</sup>

Immediately following the Italian invasion in October, 1940, the Greek community began a series of fund-raising activities that would eventually involve virtually every group and organization in the colony. Following the lead of its national organization, a local

Greek War Relief Association (GWRA) organized a variety of fund-raisers ranging from door-to-door solicitations to a huge rally at the Civic Auditorium in 1941 featuring motion picture stars from Hollywood.<sup>74</sup>

The German invasion and conquest of Greece in April, 1941, prevented the sending of direct aid, so the GWRA cooperated with the Red Cross, AHEPA, and later the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in order to ship badly needed supplies to that occupied country. San Francisco's Greek community supported enthusiastically the national AHEPA's war bonds sales campaign, which eventually surpassed the \$500 million mark.<sup>75</sup> Practically every eligible male in the community served in the armed forces, and several lost their lives.<sup>76</sup>

The Germans' withdrawal from Greece in 1944 allowed the city's Greeks to engage in direct relief activities once again. Throughout a savage civil war (1944-1949) that further drained the Greek people's resources, they sent hundreds of bundles and packages of clothing and non-perishable food items to the UNRRA for use in the poverty-stricken country and participated in several campaigns, including aid to war orphans and construction of hospitals and health centers.<sup>77</sup>

The Truman administration's decision to send direct aid to the ruling anti-communist faction in Athens in 1947 marked the close of a seven-year era of close involvement by San Francisco's Greeks in both America's war effort and Greece's survival. Their Americanism no longer questioned, they had assisted brilliantly their homeland in its most critical hour.

San Francisco's Greek Town had a relatively brief existence. Its residents began moving into outlying neighborhoods even before the 1920s. It lacked the amenities of a North Beach or a Cow Hollow that

might have fostered more permanent settlement, so that the children of those young agrarians who chose to make their future in the city grew up in middle-class neighborhoods far removed from Third Street.

This early dispersion was accelerated by the unsatisfactory situation that existed within their church community and their local societies. Too often personalism and parochialism seemed to come before genuine issues and community needs. As a result, where there might have been a greater sense of cohesiveness, there was withdrawal. Greek Town's poor location within an increasingly industrialized and commercialized sector of the city speeded a dispersal that would have occurred anyway.

Cultural Hellenism did not pervade the city's Hellenic colony as it did those in the East. The intense flag-waving and memorializing that took place with regularity in New York and Chicago were not duplicated in San Francisco. Obviously, distance was a major factor in this contrast. The Bay Area's Greek population has never had the easy access and close proximity to the archdiocesan nerve center or the large-scale Greek-American economic power that emerged along the Atlantic seaboard. In the urban East, far larger Greek Towns emerged, better able to preserve native traditions through sheer numbers and greater availability of "new blood," with greater concentrations of population and businesses.

The San Francisco Greek colony's direction was influenced in several ways. It became the earliest and largest established Greek community west of Chicago. Yet its members, forced to compete with several other concentrated ethnic groups, entered a highly competitive marketplace where ethnicity and tradition had a weaker hold, and where individualism and experimentation were encouraged.

Thus, despite its life span of some thirty-five years, San Francisco's Greek community lacked the organizational depth and business and political leadership of

many eastern cities. Diffusion in both the marriage and housing pattern, together with the ongoing internal dissension that divided the church and the various secular organizations, prevented the kind of harmonious relationships which hold a community together for an extended period.

Like the city itself, the Greek community's future since 1945 has been linked increasingly to the growth of new church communities and organizations in other parts of a fast-growing Bay Region. In more than one instance the children of those pioneers who worshiped in Greek Town have been a major force in their own church community's development. This could very well be Greek Town's most important and enduring legacy.

Photographs are courtesy of the following: pages 115 and 128, Amanda Kockos Antipa; page 116, Marie Vavuris Petros; page 117, Fr. Anthony Kosturos; page 118, Marie Damianakes Stratikis; page 121, the author; page 122 top, Conrad Pavellas, bottom, Antelo T. Mountanos; page 124, Vivian Vellis; page 125, John Preovolos; and page 129, Peter Boudoures.

### Notes

1. With the exception of one master's thesis completed in 1951 and a lengthy article by a local scholar, there is no historical account in English of the Greeks in the San Francisco Bay Area. Confer Demitra Georgas, "Greek Settlement of the San Francisco Bay Area" (unpublished master's thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1951), and Nicholas J. Rozakos, "Greeks in San Francisco," *Athene*, XXI: 4 (Winter, 1961), 3-16. Mr. Rozakos has also contributed several articles in Greek dealing with specific individuals and organizations within the city's Greek colony.
2. John Boyd Thatcher, *Christopher Columbus* (New York: G. P.

- Putnam's Sons (1903-1904), II, p. 331.
3. Hoffman Birney, *Brothers of Doom: The Story of the Pizarros of Peru* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), pp. 84, 87-88, 93, 244-245.
  4. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *Don Juan De Oñate Colonizer of New Mexico 1595-1628* (University of New Mexico, 1953), pp. 158, 263, 293.
  5. For a definitive account of Fuca's activities see Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven: Yale University, 1973), pp. 21-28.
  6. Hector Chevigny, *Russian America: The Great Alaskan Venture, 1741-1867* (New York: Viking, 1965), pp. 77, 81, 83.
  7. Alan P. Bowman (comp.), *Index to the 1850 Census of California* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1972); Warren Thompson, *Growth and Changes in California's Population* (Los Angeles: Haynes Foundation, 1955), p. 70.
  8. Most of the camel drivers from Constantinople were Greeks. See Harlan D. Fowler, *Camels to California* (Stanford 1950), pp. 35, 50, 79; Benjamin C. Truman, *Life, Adventures and Capture of Tiburcio Vasquez* (Los Angeles Star, 1874), pp. 6, 9-10. George became a naturalized citizen in 1867, assuming the name of George Allen. He died at the old Mission Vieja, near Montebello, in 1913, and is buried at Whittier, California.
  9. *San Francisco Bulletin*, January 12, 1875; Edward A. Ackerman, *New England's Fishing Industry* (University of Chicago, 1941), p. 291.
  10. George Brown Goode, *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States* (Washington, D.C. 1887), p. 615.
  11. *Great Register*, 1876-1882; Crocker-Langley *San Francisco Directory*, 1885-1917; Holy Trinity church, *Log Book*, 1903-1921.
  12. U.S. *Census of Population, 1910*; 61st Cong., 3rd sess., Sen. Doc. 747: *Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission*, II (Washington, 1911); Thompson, *Growth and Changes*, p. 70.
  13. Statement by George Hontalas, personal interview, August 10, 1973.
  14. Harry Kockos, "Autobiographical sketch," (typescript, n. d. (1972?), 11-12; conversation with George Tsougarakis, July 29, 1979.
  15. Helen Zeese Papanikolas, "Toil and Rage in a New Land: The Greek Immigrants in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 8:2 (Spring, 1970), 121-133, 135.
  16. California Promotion Committee, *Map of Part of San Francisco*, dated April 18, 1908 (Bancroft Library Collection); Department of City Planning, Staff Report to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, "Recommendation for Designation of a South of Market Redevelopment Area," September 24, 1952; *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 19, 1958.
  17. 61st Cong., 3rd sess., Sen. Doc. 756, 298.
  18. Rozakos, "Greeks in San Francisco," 4-5.
  19. Alvin Averbach, "San Francisco's South of Market District, 1858-1958: The Emergence of a Skid Row," *California Historical Quarterly*, 52:3 (Fall, 1973), 196-223.
  20. Alvin Averbach, "A Short History of South of Market Before the Advent of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency" (draft of unpublished paper dated January 11, 1972, San Francisco, California), pp. 14-15. An examination of the San Francisco water department's records, which were preserved during the 1906 fire, reveals that Greek residents were moving away from the South Market area in large numbers by 1920.
  21. John S. Hittell, *The Commerce and Industries of the Pacific Coast of North America* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Company, 1882), p. 525; *San Francisco, An Illustrated Review*, 1887, p. 122; *Master Hands in the Affairs of the Pacific Coast* (San Francisco: Western Historical and Publishing Company, 1892), pp. 251-252.
  22. Georgas, "Greek Settlement," p. 28; Crocker-Langley *Directory, 1905-1917*.
  23. See Theodore Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1964), Chapter 13, for an illuminating discussion concerning Greeks in the business world.
  24. Associated Greek Press of America, *Greek Business Guide and Directory of the Western States* (San Francisco: 1927), pp. 38-80; Robert H. Willson, "San Francisco's Foreign Colonies," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 9, 1923.
  25. Greek Town pioneer Gus Chiveris has summarized such business operations in *The Hellenic Journal*, July 26, 1979.
  26. Kockos, "Autobiographical sketch," p. 21; *California*, March 5, 1921.
  27. *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 6, 1889; Alexander Doumouras, "Greek Orthodox Communities in America Before World War I," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, VII: 4 (1967), 180. The author is indebted to Mr. Paul Manolis for his invaluable assistance with this segment.
  28. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 8, 1894; Doumouras, "Greek Orthodox Communities," p. 177.
  29. Kosta, "Incidents," pp. 47-48.
  30. "The First By-Laws of the Greek Orthodox Community of San Francisco, California, April 3, 1904,"; *Greek Orthodox Year Book 1957*, p. 20.
  31. Kosta, "Incidents," p. 52.
  32. Georgas, "Greek Settlement of the SFBA," p. 26; Rev. John Petropoulos, *Annual Report of Holy Trinity Church, 1945* (typescript, n. p.).
  33. Archmandrite P. Kirmitsis, "The Greek Orthodox Community of Sacramento, California," in *Program*, "The Consecration of the Church and the first Clergy-Laity Confer-



- ence of the IV Diocesan District" (May 9-13, 1956), n. p. (37).
34. Prometheus Publishing Company, *Ai Ellinikai Parikaiton Ditikon Politikon tis Boreiou Amerikis* (The Hellenic Colonies of the Western States of North America), (San Francisco, 1918-1919). p. 24; Rozakos, "Greeks in San Francisco," 7.
35. Prometheus, *Hellenic Colonies*, 23.
36. St. Sophia's Cathedral, *Minutes*, May 19-20, 1921; Georgas, "Greek Settlement," p. 27.
37. Georgas, "Greek Settlement," p. 27; Saint Sophia's Church, *Minutes*, February 8, 1923 and May 7, 1935; *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 18, 1935.
38. *San Francisco Examiner*, August 8, September 7, and October 11, 1936; Boudoures, "Autobiography," p. 94. Unfortunately there is no biography of Father Lokis available.
39. Georgas, "Greek Settlement," p. 27.
40. M. Jensen, "An Outline of the History of the Cemeteries in Lawndale now Colma, Inc." (typescript, June 1, 1952), pp. 4-5.
41. Statement by Nick and Steve Doukas, personal interview, December 6, 1973.
42. Federal Writers' Project, *Foreign Newspapers of San Francisco* (San Francisco: 1939), p. 79.
43. See note 34.
44. Federal Writers Project, *Foreign Newspapers*, p. 79.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 80; Rozakos, "Greeks in San Francisco," 11; Bambi Malafouris, *Ellines tis Amerikis* (Greeks of America) (New York: M. Malafouris, 1947), p. 230.
46. See, for example, *California*, January 27 and April 5, 1912. It should be noted that sensationalism has long been a useful method of increasing circulation.
47. For important editorial statements see, for example, *Prometheus*, June 25, 1906; *California*, March 5 and October 15, 1921.
48. George Dorsey, *Christopher of San Francisco* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 23; statements by George Christopher, George Maheras, and Peter Tamaras, personal interviews.
49. Statement by Vivian Stratis Vellis, personal interview, August 8, 1979.
50. Statement by Anna Milonas Loutas, personal interview, July 16, 1970; Saloutos, *Greeks in the United States*, pp. 314-317.
51. The author examined the 1972 San Francisco Directory's list of surnames beginning with the letters "Ka." Of the sixty-four names obviously of Greek origin, twenty-three had addresses in the Richmond or Sunset district. Of seventy-six respondents to a community questionnaire, over ninety per cent had moved from South of Market to one of those two districts.
52. Statement by Peter Tamaras, personal interview, July 2, 1970.
53. *By-laws of the Hellenic Mutual Benevolent Society of San Francisco (HMBS)*, *California*, 32 pp; *California*, March 8 and July 12, 1913.
54. The HMBS' Album, "40th Anniversary and Annual Entertainment and Dance" (1928), contains brief histories and biographical sketches relating to the various societies' origins. From the collection of Nicholas Rozakos; *California*, May 3, 1918.
55. Rozakos, "Greeks in San Francisco," 12; *California*, April 20, 1912 and February 1, 1913.
56. Alexandra Apostolides Sonenfeld to the author, August 15, 1973.
57. Rozakos, "Greeks in San Francisco," 12.
58. Alexandra Apostolides Sonenfeld to Marie Petros, n. d. Copy in possession of the author.
59. Panajioti Kokkos to the author, February 3, 1974; Nicholas J. Rozakos, "Daughters of Penelope," *National Greek Tribune*, November 16, 1969.
60. Rozakos, "Greeks in San Francisco," 12-13.
61. *Hellenic Journal*, July 28, 1977.
62. Statements by James George and Peter George, July 16, 1971; *Hellenic Journal*, July 28, 1977.
63. Boudoures, "Autobiography," 43, 51; *California*, August 8 and 15, 1925; September 19, 1925.
64. "George Peterson Cherakis" (typescript, n. d.), 4 pp.; *New California*, May 14, 1964. The information for Cherakis and the Hellenic Post is based largely on the Hellenic Post file, courtesy of Mr. Frank Agnost.
65. Saloutos, *Greeks in the United States*, pp. 246-256; Malafouris, *Greeks of America*, pp. 205-216.
66. Statement by Salvatore Stella, personal interview, August 23, 1973; Order of AHEPA, "Official Program, Ninth Annual National Convention" (August 24-31, 1931), 67.
67. Statement by Peter T. Angel, personal interview, August 10, 1973.
68. *San Francisco Examiner*, November 5, 1929.
69. *San Francisco Examiner*, November 7, 1934.
70. *San Francisco Examiner*, November 7, 1945; Dorsey, *Christopher*, pp. 7-68; statement by George Christopher, personal interview, August 27, 1970.
71. *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 9, 1949.
72. Statement by George Hontalas, personal interview, August 10, 1973.
73. *San Francisco News*, November 22, 1940.
74. Boudoures, "Autobiography," p. 119; Saloutos, *Greeks in the United States*, pp. 344-345.
75. Charles C. Moskos, Jr., *Greek Americans* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 50.
76. Katon, "Autobiographical sketch," 7.
77. Boudoures, "Autobiography," pp. 134-135.

# GOLD RUSH JAIL

## THE PRISON SHIP *EUPHEMIA*



*A drawing of the Euphemia and Apollo done some four years after the Euphemia served as San Francisco's prison ship.*



The discovery of gold in California during the early days of 1848 provoked, in the quest for fast and easy fortune, a mass migration to California that has been termed "the greatest mass movement of humanity since the Crusades." In California, towns and villages were literally abandoned as all able-bodied males headed for the gold laden foothills of the Sierra Nevada. San Francisco was among the first settlements in California to be stricken with gold fever. The town paper, the *San Francisco Californian*, lamented: "The whole country . . . resounds with the sordid cry of gold, Gold, GOLD! while the field is left half planted, the house half built, and everything neglected but the manufacture of shovels and pickaxes."<sup>1</sup>

The "sordid cry" of gold was soon heard outside of California. News of the gold discovery spread through the United States, and from there to the rest of the world. By early 1849, hundreds of vessels cleared from various ports, their destination California. California was soon host to thousands of eager gold seekers from all parts of the globe. San Francisco, being located at the entrance to the great San Francisco Bay, found itself to be the gateway to the gold fields. The effect upon the former hide droguers outpost was instant; from a tiny settlement half hidden by sand dunes, it became ". . . a Venice built of pine instead of marble . . . a city of ships, piers, and tides."<sup>2</sup>

The streets of San Francisco were crowded with thousands of argonauts. Mingling with them, and attempting to remain anonymous in the chaotic conditions of the excited Gold Rush days, were various criminals. The "rough and ready" life, the lack of government or of a powerful enforcement of law, and the intoxicating influence of gold proved to be inducements to criminal activity. San Francisco was daily the scene of murder, rape, robbery, assault, mayhem and arson. Surprisingly, much of this was

ignored by the general population, many of whom were transient. This may explain the lack of decision when dealing with San Francisco's criminals. However, as San Francisco became a more settled and established town, the reaction of the populace to criminal activity became increasingly hostile. The final outrage to many was the assault by an organized group known as the "Hounds" against the San Francisco Chilean community on July 15, 1849. In the aftermath of this bloody event, San Francisco organized to drive out the Hounds and press for an effective police force and a stronger jail.

San Francisco's first jail was an outdated and flimsy log structure built around 1846 at Clay and Stockton streets. Early San Francisco resident John Henry Brown recalled, in later days, just how flimsy the jail, or "calaboose," was:<sup>3</sup>

One night a man, by the name of Pete, from Oregon, was put in the "Calaboose," for having cut the hair off the tails of five horses and shaved the stumps. When asked what he did it for, he said he wanted to send him (sic) to England, to be made into a brush, to brush the flies off the Queen's dinner table. As Leavensworth (the Alcalde) did not send him his breakfast, he called on Leavensworth at his office, with the door of the Calaboose on his back, and told him if his breakfast was not sent up in half an hour he would take French leave. Leavensworth sent his breakfast . . .

The Town Council of San Francisco realized how insecure their jail was, and following the "Hounds" incident they began to search for a new jail. A special committee was appointed to either purchase or lease a new building for the jail. A particular dilemma faced the committee; the inflated gold prices of San

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*San Francisco in 1850. This drawing was rendered by an otherwise unknown artist named Prendergast sometime around November of 1850. It shows how the rapidly growing city is encroaching upon the waterfront. Two storeships, one of them the Apollo, can be seen to the left. This drawing gives the city an almost peaceful air, however, it was a raucous, hard drinking frontier town. In the midst of this, the Euphemia served as a dismal floating jail.*

Francisco had driven up the costs of building, hence rents were also high. A possible solution, and a thrifty one, was the use of an abandoned ship for a building. Gold fever had also stricken the crews of the vessels that had brought the argonauts to California, and hundreds of ships lay empty along the waterfront. The solution for the special committee's dilemma was at hand; they purchased a ship for use as San Francisco's new jail.

Prison ships were not a new idea in penal practice. "Hulks," as they were commonly known, had been extensively used in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, notably in Great Britain. However, by the time of the California Gold Rush, prison ships were no longer in use. San Francisco revived the practice. Ships converted into buildings played an important role in Gold Rush San Francisco. In addition to the prison ship, there was a ship converted into a church, and other vessels, such as the famous *Niantic* and *Apollo*, had been converted into warehouses, hotels, and offices.

At the October 8, 1849 meeting of the Town Council of San Francisco, the special committee reported "the purchase of the brig *Euphemia* for the purpose of a prison ship, and, on motion, the report of the committee was adopted and the purchase approved."<sup>4</sup> The former owner of the *Euphemia*, incidently, was Town Council member William Heath Davis. The purchase price: three thousand, five hundred dollars.<sup>5</sup>

At the same meeting, the Town Council appointed their fellow members Sam Brannan, William Heath Davis and Gabriel Post a special committee "to wait upon the Directors of the Central Wharf Association and obtain, if possible, permission from them to lay the brig *Euphemia* alongside their wharf, to superintend the necessary alterations and place her when completed in the hands of the Captain of Police . . ."<sup>6</sup> William Heath Davis, incidently, was

also a member of the Board of Directors of the Central Wharf Association.

The Town Council also ordered that the committee "procure fifty sets of balls and chains for the purpose of securing prisoners . . ."<sup>7</sup> Satisfied with the actions they had taken, the Town Council acted no further on the *Euphemia* until their meeting of November 3, 1849, when "Mr. Davis presented a communication from the Directors of the Central Wharf Association, granting permission to the Council to lay the prison ship alongside the wharf for the space of three months."<sup>8</sup> The three month lease period was later extended; the *Euphemia* was located at what is now Battery and Sacramento streets, near the Central Wharf, until 1851.

Once the *Euphemia* was berthed next to the Central Wharf, work was begun to convert her into a prison ship. Most probably the area below the decks was converted into a cell block, while the after cabin above deck must have served as the guardhouse. On December 10, 1849, at the Town Council meeting, Messrs. Brannan, Davis and Post reported the satisfactory conversion of the ship into a prison. The work had required some \$1,033.75 worth of lumber.<sup>9</sup> The balls and chains arrived in late January of 1850 at the cost of \$523.80.<sup>10</sup> Not counting labor costs, the new jail had cost San Francisco \$5,357.55, not a bad price considering "a simple one-story house of clapboard and shingles cost approximately \$15,000 to build" at that time.<sup>11</sup>

At her berth on Central Wharf, the *Euphemia* was in the heart of the rapidly expanding city. New construction constantly pushed the city limits out into San Francisco Bay, finally overrunning the *Euphemia* and her "storeship" neighbors the *Niantic* and the *Apollo*. With the nearby streets and buildings raised on piles above the shallow waters of the bay, and hemmed in by the construction around her, the *Euphemia* lay quietly in the stagnant waters of the San



Francisco waterfront, never to go to sea again. It was the end of a long career that had probably begun sometime around 1800 in the British Isles. Built as a brig, or a small two masted vessel, the *Euphemia* was about ninety feet long and was registered at 137 tons.<sup>12</sup> As to her place of origin, it is unknown. There are several *Euphemias* listed in Lloyd's Register of Shipping at that time. The name *Euphemia* derives from a Greek word denoting a person of whom others speak well, that is to say, a person of good repute. The name was quite common in the British Isles beginning around 1200 A.D. It became scarce in later years, and by 1700 was confined to Scotland alone.<sup>13</sup> That may be a clue as to *Euphemia's* origins.

One source states that the *Euphemia* was captured during the War of 1812 by the United States and was kept after the war as a war-prize.<sup>14</sup> According to her later owner, William Heath Davis, she was afterwards employed in the China Trade by the firm of

Henry Skinner and Company.<sup>15</sup> Finally, she arrived in Hawaii, where Davis bought her. Davis' memoirs record that he and his partners purchased the *Euphemia* for "between \$50,000 and \$60,000, my share being \$17,000 or \$18,000" in early 1846.<sup>16</sup> On February 26, 1846, the *Euphemia*, with Thomas Rus-som as Master and William Heath Davis as Super-cargo, cleared Honolulu harbor for California. Davis planned to use the ship as a trade vessel between California and Hawaii. Her typical cargo to California, according to Davis, was "tea, coffee, sugar, clothing, boots and shoes, assorted liquors, foreign wines of the best quality, ale and porter, flour and other articles . . ."<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately for Davis, the *Euphemia* was to prove to be a headache. Disputes with his partners finally forced him to buy them out. The ship, despite a healthy trade, was much too small for Davis' anticipated business. According to one biographer, "the





more he employed this ship, the more Davis came to consider her an inefficient and basically unsound craft."<sup>18</sup> Just before the discovery of gold, the *Euphemia*, enroute to Peru on a trading voyage, "struck a rocky crag near Monterey . . ." The damaged ship luckily made it to Monterey, where the crew deserted, vowing to never sail on the ship again. Davis hastened to Monterey, where, "by dint of considerable effort and after the use of quantities of rosin, tarpitch, and oakum, Davis readied the *Euphemia* for her return to San Francisco where she was careened, recaulked, and her bottom recoppered . . ."<sup>19</sup>

Davis continued to use the ship until late 1849, well after the Gold Rush had begun. That year, the ship made three voyages; the first was to Mazatlan, Mexico to buy trade goods to sell at a large profit in gold mad San Francisco. Her last two voyages were to Bodega, possibly to pick up lumber, which also sold at a great profit in San Francisco. After her last voyage, the *Euphemia* arrived in San Francisco on August 17, 1849.<sup>20</sup> She was destined to never leave again; that October she was purchased by the town

council, for Davis an undoubtedly fortuitous event.

By February 1, 1850, the *Euphemia* was receiving prisoners. In addition to any criminals apprehended, the new prison ship also held any "suspicious, insane, or forlorn persons found strolling about the city at night."<sup>21</sup> The *Euphemia* thus became California's first formal insane asylum. That first year twelve persons adjudged to be insane were locked in her hold.<sup>22</sup> In later years the San Francisco *Alta California* recalled that the *Euphemia* had been "housed over and furnished quarters to many of the poor unfortunates . . ."<sup>23</sup>

The prisoners on board the *Euphemia* earned their keep by toiling at public works while on a chain-gang. During the day they would labor on shore, to return at night to the ship. Conditions on board were undoubtedly less than desirable. While there is no account of life on board the *Euphemia*, a comparison may be fairly drawn from a description of life on board the *Waban*, a prison ship used by the State of California on San Francisco Bay in 1853:<sup>24</sup>

At night they were locked below, four or five men to each eight foot square compartment. During the warm summer



This photograph shows the site of the discovery of a small buried ship at the Northwest corner of Sacramento street at Battery. The vessel is lying with her bows pointing toward Sacramento, or parallel to Battery. It is most probably the *Euphemia*, which is recorded to have been discovered in 1921 at the aforementioned corner. The vessel found here cannot have been the *Apollo*, which is known to have lain parallel with Sacramento street. In 1925, a vessel lying next to the ship shown here was discovered parallel to Sacramento street and was identified as the *Apollo*.

days they stewed in their own juices, while in the rainy winter they stayed below day after dreary day. In the mornings the effluvia of feces and sweat and general decay was so strong that the guards refused to go below until the lower decks had been aired out . . .

Meals were served to the prisoners by a private citizen paid by the city, as the following receipt shows:

Recd San Francisco June 25, 1850  
from Chas. G. Scott City Treasurer  
Bond (No. 4) Sixty 40/100 Dollars in full  
for bill of meals of prison brig April 26/50  
\$60.40 (signed) Jacob Colvin

In addition to meals, the city contracted out to private citizens for firewood, supplies, and medical assistance:

Recd San Francisco Sept. 6, 1850  
bill \$45.50/100 in payment of Dr.  
Jno. O Briens (sic) bill of medical attendance  
on board the prison brig: (314)  
(signed) John O Brien

Conditions on board the *Euphemia* worsened throughout 1850 as more prisoners were locked in her hold. As early as August 4, 1850, the *Alta California* noted that:

Our attention has been recently called to the condition of prison discipline in this city. The "brig" and the stationhouses are literally filled with prisoners, and we recently heard one of our city functionaries express the opinion that if any more were incarcerated these places would rival the famous black-hole of Calcutta. As it is, six or eight men are crowded into a single cell, scarcely large enough for one man's accommodation. It has been recommended that another brig be purchased to relieve the crowded state of our prison houses. An expenditure of a thousand or two thousand dollars would probably accomplish the desired end, and it is hoped that the city council will take the matter in hand immediately.

The City of San Francisco eventually began contruc-

tion of a larger prison, which was completed in mid-1851.

The eventual fate of the *Euphemia* is unknown. Local legend insists that she was seized by a creditor of the city in payment of a debt. There is no record, however, to substantiate this claim. Most probably, as the city grew, and the location at which she was anchored became thoroughly boxed in by streets and buildings, the *Euphemia* was scuttled where she lay in order to make way for land fill and a building on the site. Some sources claim that she was towed away and used by State of California as a prison on the bay, but that vessel is known to be the *Waban*, another ship.<sup>25</sup>

Most probably, the *Euphemia* was stripped of her upper works and all usable fittings by one of San Francisco's many marine salvage firms of Gold Rush days. Then her bare bones would have been allowed to slowly settle into the shallow water and mud, to be covered with debris and sand as the city filled over the old waterfront. The remains of the *Euphemia* then lay forgotten and buried as San Francisco grew and expanded through the years. Several buildings marked the site of the old ship, the last being razed in 1920 to make way for the construction of the new headquarters building of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

The January 15, 1921, edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* announced the re-discovery of the *Euphemia* with the headline "EXCAVATION BARES CITY'S EARLY-DAY PRISON SHIP: HISTORIC BRIG UNCOVERED AT DOWNTOWN CORNER." The newspaper reported:

Under the mud and silt dug out by steamshovels at the corner of Battery and Sacramento streets, the remains of San Francisco's first jail are being brought to light . . . the *Euphemia* was buried under the creeping silt until the excavation . . . disclosed her lying some thirty feet below street level . . . the hulk of the *Euphemia* lies upright in the



*The stem of the uncovered ship. Note that it exhibits no sign of being burnt or charred, yet the Apollo was burned in the May 4, 1851 fire. It would appear that this vessel had been scuttled at the location prior to the fire of May 4, 1851. After that time this area was built over and was no longer used for shipping. The evidence points to this vessel being the prison ship Euphemia.*

mud, her bows pointing west. From the size of the stem, some three or four feet of which remain intact, and the slope of her sides it is evident that she must have been eighty or ninety feet in length. The timbers are much rotted, although the stem is in fair preservation.

In later years, former San Francisco *Chronicle* reporter William Martin Camp recalled the discovery of the ship:<sup>26</sup>

... the new bank building needed an especially deep foundation, and the steam shovel had worked its way to a considerable depth when it struck a snag. Workmen tried every means of removing the obstacle before they discovered they were digging into the stem piece of a ship. They went to work with pick and shovel and finally uncovered the entire keel and a considerable part of the planking and flooring of the ship. When the timber was sawed up it was found to be as sweet and hard as the day it entered the water.

This story came from Walter MacArthur, a Glasgow

sailor who for many years was the United States Shipping Commissioner of San Francisco. Captain MacArthur, an authority on ships, examined the hull and identified it as the remains of the brig *Euphemia*, built in England, a pioneer vessel which ended her days as a prison ship anchored in the cove. The discovery sent a thrill through the scores of idle watchers who stood around the protective railing surrounding the excavation, and up to the day he died old MacArthur liked to tell this story of the ghost ship which had risen.

Despite MacArthur's identification of the remains, some have thought that the ship uncovered was the storeship *Apollo*, which had been located to the west of the *Euphemia*. However, in 1925, work at the northwest corner of Battery and Sacramento streets, in the rear of the new Federal Reserve Bank, discovered the stern of the *Apollo*. Only about eight feet of the *Apollo* was uncovered in that excavation, and no more.<sup>27</sup>

The discovery of the *Euphemia* and of her neighbor, the *Apollo*, thrilled San Francisco much in the same way the discovery of the old *Niantic* in April of 1978 captivated the imagination of the city. Though some of the timber must have been removed in the Federal Reserve Bank construction, parts if not most of the frame of the *Euphemia* must still exist beneath the basement floor of the Federal Reserve Bank. Future construction on the site will undoubtedly uncover her grave once again. When that happens, San Francisco will once again be privileged with a rare view of the Gold Rush days, as well as a poignant reminder of the human suffering endured on the ship, for the ghosts of her prisoners are chained to the bones of the *Euphemia*, if not in fact, then in memory.

The drawing of the *Euphemia* on page 134 is courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, San Francisco. The view of San Francisco in 1850 was supplied by the Society of California Pioneers. Other photos are from the CHS Library.

## Notes

1. San Francisco *Californian*, May 29, 1848. As quoted in Rodman W. Paul; *California Gold*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 19.
2. Benjamin Vicuna y McKenna, *Paginas de mi Diario durante tres Anos de Viaje* (Pages From My Diary During Three Years of Travel) As quoted in Edwin A. Beilharz and Carlos U. López; *We Were 49ers! Chilean Accounts of the California Gold Rush*. (Pasadena: Ward Ritchie Press, 1976), p. 194.
3. John Henry Brown; *Early Days of San Francisco*. (Oakland: Biobooks, 1949), p. 35.
4. "Minutes of the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of San Francisco . . . And A Record of the Proceedings of the Ayuntamiento or Town Council of San Francisco, from August 6, 1849 until May 3rd, 1850 . . ." (San Francisco: Towne and Bacon, 1860), p. 70.
5. "1849-1850 San Francisco Financial Record Book." Manuscript on file in the San Francisco History Room, Main Branch, San Francisco Public Library. Receipt dated October 25, 1849.
6. "Minutes of the Proceedings . . . of the Ayuntamiento or Town Council . . .," p. 71.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
8. "Proceedings of the Town Council of San Francisco, Upper California." (San Francisco: Alta California Press, 1849), p. 21.
9. "Financial Record Book" Receipt dated January 22, 1850.
10. "Minutes of the Proceedings . . . of the Ayuntamiento or Town Council . . ." p. 71.
11. Harold Kirker; *California's Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*. (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973), p. 31.
12. According to the records of the Harbor Master of San Francisco as copied in "List of Vessels Arriving in the Port of San Francisco in 1849-1850." Manuscript on file in the Library of the Society of California Pioneers, San Francisco.
13. R. G. Withycombe; *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names*. 2nd Edition. (London: The Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 105.
14. Stuart A. Brody, Ph.D.; "Hospitalization of the Mentally Ill During California's Early Years: 1849-1853." *The Psychiatric Quarterly Supplement*, Part 2, 1964. (Utica, New York: State Hospitals Press), p. 2.
15. William Heath Davis; *Seventy Five Years in California*. (San Francisco: John Howell, 1967), p. 201.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
18. Andrew F. Rolle; *An American in California: The Biography of William Heath Davis, 1822-1909*. (San Marino: Henry E. Huntington Library, 1956), p. 52.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
20. "List of Vessels Arriving in the Port of San Francisco . . ."
21. Brody, "Mentally Ill," p. 2.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
23. San Francisco *Alta California*, May 22, 1882.
24. Kenneth Lamott; *Chronicles of San Quentin*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), p. 14.
25. Irvin Ashkenazy; "Hell Afloat." *Westways*, July 1965, p. 15.
26. William Martin Camp; *San Francisco, Port of Gold*. (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1948), p. 77.
27. San Francisco *Bulletin*, May 5, 1925.



# CHINESE IN CALIFORNIA'S

In 1850 or 1851, Chinese immigrants to America founded California's salt-water fishing industry, an industry to which they were contributing several hundred thousand dollars annually by the 1880s. Chinese fishermen were important in the business up through the turn of the century, venturing into fresh-water river fishing as well as the salt-water ocean and bays. Then, between 1905 and 1910 most disappeared from California's waters only to make a partial come-back in the 1920s and 1930s. Surprisingly, little scholarly attention has been devoted to them beyond one doctoral thesis on Chinese shrimpers on San Francisco Bay and four pages in *A History of the Chinese in California: a Syllabus* by Thomas W. Chinn, H. Mark Lai, and Philip P. Choy.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps one reason for the neglect is that Chinese fishermen in California, unlike those of other nationalities, generally lived in small fishing villages of their own construction somewhat removed from other parts of the population. They were not an obvious part of the landscape. Their villages were located along the waterways they intended to inhabit and consisted of large, unpainted redwood cabins built on stilts out over the beaches or directly over the water.<sup>2</sup> The smallest ones had only one or two dwelling-places occupied by eight to ten fishermen at the most but the larger ones contained several hundred residents and also had a general store or two, a temple, gambling places, and in at least one case a village school.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the villages, ocean-going fishermen had semi-permanent camps on islands and protected coastal areas where they

would pitch tents over stone foundations they had constructed.<sup>4</sup>

There were four principal areas in which the Chinese fishermen built their permanent fishing villages: on San Francisco Bay, along the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers, in the Monterey area, and at San Diego. (Outside of California, there was another center in Oregon and a sixth on Canada's Vancouver Island.)<sup>5</sup> Of these, the area with the largest number of villages and greatest concentration of fishermen was San Francisco Bay.<sup>6</sup> There were also small, isolated villages scattered along the coast around Humboldt Bay in the north, along the San Luis Obispo County shoreline in the south, and on the islands of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa. Semi-permanent camps have been located on San Clemente and Santa Monica Islands. There were probably more on other of the Santa Barbara Islands, Palos Verdes had one and there may have been one just south of San Francisco on the Pacific Coast side.<sup>7</sup>

The first two of these villages were constructed between 1850 and 1852, almost immediately after the start of California's gold rush. One of these was at Rincon Point on the San Francisco Bay directly under today's Bay Bridge on the San Francisco side.<sup>8</sup> The other was near Monterey.<sup>9</sup> The San Francisco village grew quickly: 150 fishermen and twenty-five boats (sampans they had constructed themselves) by 1853.<sup>10</sup> This village seems to have disappeared by 1865, however, probably crowded out by city ordinances and real estate speculation. In the meantime, other villages grew up along San Francisco Bay at places such as Point San Pedro (in Marin County: today's China Camp State Park), Point San Bruno, and Point San Mateo.<sup>11</sup>

The immediate origin of these first Chinese fishermen is not entirely clear. A few are supposed to

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# FISHING INDUSTRY, 1850-1941



have been disappointed miners driven out of the gold country by the Foreign Miners Tax of 1854.<sup>12</sup> The others may have learned fishing in China and on arriving in San Francisco decided to pursue their former calling rather than engage in the risky business of gold mining. In the 1870s their ranks were swelled when completion of the transcontinental and then various California railroads released thousands more Chinese into the labor market, a significant number of whom took up fishing. By the 1880s, there were reputed to be almost thirty Chinese fishing villages on San Francisco Bay stretching from

San Jose in the south to Marin and Contra Costa counties in the north. The number of Chinese fishermen on the bay was by this time well over 1,000, and possibly as high as 3,000-4,000 during the season.<sup>13</sup>

These fishermen were never allowed to pursue their occupation in peace. Lobbied by anti-Chinese sentiment, the State legislature instituted a monthly tax of \$4.00 on all Chinese fishermen in 1860.<sup>14</sup> At a time when the average fisherman netted \$20-\$30 a month during the season (and much less during the winter months),<sup>15</sup> this tax was enough to persuade

OVERLEAF *Chinese owner-operators with their motor-powered sardine boats in Los Angeles harbor sometime during the first half of the century.*

many to turn to other occupations. Others brought suit against the State legislature. Pressure from the suit, loss of revenue and loss of fresh fish persuaded the latter to repeal the tax in 1864.<sup>16</sup>

An even more serious campaign against the Chinese fishermen began in the early 1880s. This time anti-Chinese sentiment found an ally in a new spirit of conservationism sweeping through state and federal fish regulatory agencies.<sup>17</sup> In addition, fishermen of other ethnic backgrounds were anxious to eliminate competition from Chinese. The result was a series of laws, many upheld by the courts, such as an 1880 one forbidding Chinese to fish commercially in California (ruled unconstitutional) and an 1897 one (held constitutional) forbidding shrimping during the months in which shrimp were abundant. (Much attention was devoted to shrimp since by this time most Chinese fishermen on San Francisco Bay pursued shrimp exclusively.) In 1905, the State legislature passed a law forbidding the export of dried shrimp to China (where ninety percent of the catch was usually sent), and in 1910 it forbade the use of the "Chinese bag net" favored by most of the Chinese fishermen on the bay.<sup>18</sup>

As a result, the number of villages ceased to grow and the number of fishermen began to decline. Numerous fishermen were prosecuted and although many hired lawyers and put up a defense, most lost their case.<sup>19</sup> By the turn of the century, the Chinese role in San Francisco Bay fishing was obviously on the decline even as the Portuguese and especially the Italians made significant gains in the industry. By 1913, most of the Chinese fishermen had been forced to abandon their trade and move elsewhere.<sup>20</sup>

A few fishermen lingered on, primarily at Hunter's Point and Point San Pedro in Marin County. A primary obstacle to Chinese working the San Francisco Bay was their heavy reliance on the "Chinese bag net." Around 1920, the Italian Spenger rede-

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*While shrimp was the principal catch of the Chinese fishermen on San Francisco Bay, it was not their only catch.*

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signed this net by attaching "wings" to it.<sup>21</sup> Formerly, the Chinese had staked the bag nets to the bottom of the bay and let tide action ensure a catch.<sup>22</sup> Spenger's revision, however, made it possible to troll with the net and state officials did not object to this as they had to the unmodified, staked net. By this time, state laws on the subject had changed so that the older Chinese bag net was once again permitted in the southern part of the bay while trolled nets were allowed in the northern portion. The Quan family of Point San Pedro, one of the few shrimping families left in the principal Marin County village, adopted this revised net and the practice of trolling. Soon, other shrimpers did so as well. The result was that in the 1930s, the near-empty shrimping village where the Quans lived filled up again as fishermen returned along with workers to salt, cook, hull and dry the catch. At about the same period, the Hunter's Point camps revived, revitalized by fishermen using the Chinese bag nets.<sup>23</sup>

Towards the end of the 1940s, the shrimp that the Hunter's Point and Point San Pedro villagers depended on began to disappear. A combination of bay fill, diversion of water to Los Angeles, pollution and

*An 1880s photograph of a Chinese shrimping village on San Francisco Bay (located in today's China Camp State Park) shows shrimp drying in the foreground.*



other factors made San Francisco Bay a much less hospitable environment for shrimp than before. Some have asserted that over-fishing was also a problem. With the decline in shrimp, the Chinese fishing centers on San Francisco Bay gradually emptied.<sup>24</sup> Currently, only one descendant of these Chinese fishermen is still on the bay pursuing shrimp: Frank Quan of the former Quan family operation, who fishes out of Marin County's China Camp.

While in the 1850s Chinese fishermen on San Francisco Bay took regular fish of all kinds, in the 1860s they began to specialize in shrimp as the above account suggests. These shrimp were not the prawns available now (most of which live in more southern waters) but small shrimp called *Crago Franciscorum*

and *Crago Vulgaris*. This shrimping was confined almost exclusively to San Francisco/San Pablo Bay, although at various times after 1870, they took shrimp in Tomales Bay as well.<sup>25</sup> Chinese were almost the only fishermen in California to take these shrimp. At certain times, they had competition from Italians but the Chinese prevailed in part because their fellow countrymen controlled the wholesale market.<sup>26</sup>

While shrimp was the principal catch of the Chinese fishermen on San Francisco Bay, it was not their only catch. Their nets caught everything moving along near the bottom of the bay, and this included large quantities of fish (sturgeon, herring, smelt, even occasional salmon) as well as shrimp.



*A portrait of one Chinese fisherman.  
Many of these men were former railway  
workers who moved into fishing villages  
after 1870.*



Some of the fishermen also took crabs and abalone, both in the Bay and along the Pacific Coast, as well as crayfish (rock lobsters) and clams.<sup>27</sup>

The fishermen sold what they could — the largest fish, the prettiest shrimp, and so forth — fresh on the wholesale market. The middle-men in most cases were Chinese wholesalers and fish peddlers (although from time to time, the several Bay area communities adopted discriminatory regulations designed to drive the fish peddlers out of business).<sup>28</sup> Prior to 1905, however, about eighty percent of the catch was dried and salted for export to China. A much smaller proportion of the dried product went to Chinese in the interior of the United States, to Hawaii, and Australia. The shrimp was hulled as part of this process, and most of the hulls were also sent to China as fertilizer. In the year 1880, for example, the Chinese shrimpers exported more than \$100,000 worth of shrimp and shrimp hulls whereas only about \$24,000 was sold fresh in nearby communities.<sup>29</sup> In 1905, a new California law forbade the exporting of salted, dried shrimp to China, causing a tremendous decline in shrimping. When shrimping revived in the 1920s, improved transportation plus a larger domestic market for the dried product enabled

the shrimpers to sell their entire catch within this country.<sup>30</sup>

Another early center of Chinese fishing was the Monterey area. Its first Chinese fishing village was established between 1850 and 1852. Little is known about the founders except that one, a man from the Tung-wan area near Canton, is supposed to have arrived in Monterey directly from China aboard a Chinese sea-going junk.<sup>31</sup>

This village was at first quite small, but in the 1870s and 1880s it began to grow in part because of the addition of former railroad workers. More villages were founded as well, so that by the turn of the century there were about four of them. The largest village, probably the descendant of the original colony, was located near what is today's Lighthouse Point at Pacific Grove. It consisted of some fifty cabins, at least one store, a Chinese temple and an outdoor shrine. Anti-Chinese sentiment plus the desire of real estate investors to develop the land, however, led an arsonist to burn this village to the ground in 1906.<sup>32</sup> Some of its residents fled to the other nearby villages, but others moved out of the Monterey area entirely. Continued anti-Chinese feeling prevented the reestablishment of the main village. Competition from Portuguese and especially Italian fishermen at about this time also decreased the profits Chinese could make.<sup>33</sup> Another factor working against the Chinese fishing colonies was the reluctance of the fishermen's children (who had better educational and employment opportunities) to enter their fathers' profession. (The United States policy of Chinese Exclusion which began in 1882 had effectively cut off the possibility of the fishing villages being renewed by further immigration from China.) As a result, the Monterey area's Chinese fishing villages and Chinese fishermen gradually disappeared. By 1930, they were a thing of the past.<sup>33</sup>

In the earliest days when the Monterey area vil-

lages were being established, their fishermen pursued local bay fish without concentrating on any one specific quarry, much as was the case on San Francisco Bay.<sup>34</sup> By the turn of the century, however, they had begun specializing in squid while continuing to take the others in smaller amounts. Here again, that part of their catch which had a local market was sold fresh, usually through the agency of Chinese fish peddlers. The rest was salted and dried for shipment to Chinese in other parts of the United States or, more often, to China. The wholesalers for the dried squid were mostly Chinese.<sup>35</sup>

The pattern in San Diego was similar to that established in the San Francisco and Monterey areas. Chinese fishermen did not take up their trade around San Diego until near the end of the 1850s. Two villages subsequently developed. The earlier was located very close to old San Diego and its residents exploited San Diego Bay. The second village, founded in the early 1860s, was located almost directly across the bay much nearer the ocean beside a community then called "Roseville." The Roseville fishermen eschewed bay fishing for the open seas, working most of the coast of California and halfway down the Baja California peninsula. The principal quarry for the first decade or so was barracuda, but by 1870 they began to turn to abalone.<sup>36</sup>

Although neither ever became very large, the Roseville and San Diego villages prospered and grew in the 1870s and 1880s, swelled in part by the ranks of former railway workers. From 1880 on, however, the bay fishermen came under periodic attack for relying on the "Chinese bag net."<sup>37</sup> The ocean fishermen, who did not use this net, found themselves inconvenienced by the 1882 treaty of Chinese Exclusion since when they took their junks beyond United States territorial waters and then returned, they became liable for exclusion.<sup>38</sup> Towards the end of the 1880s, immigration officials and much of the

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*The most important fishery of the Sacramento – San Joaquin was the salmon fishery which began about 1847.*

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local populace also became convinced that these ocean fishermen were smuggling large numbers of Chinese laborers into the country. Customs officers threatened to seize the fishermen's junks and the State Legislature passed laws making it illegal for Chinese to operate them off the California coast. As a result, most of the ocean going fishermen had to sell their craft to Americans while the rest sailed their junks back to China.<sup>39</sup>

With the disappearance of the ocean fishermen, the Roseville village became a ghost town. The San Diego village was emptied when the bay fishermen found themselves unable to use the "Chinese bag net." Some of these unemployed fishermen took up farming around San Diego and were quite successful at it for a time. The rest either returned to China or moved out of the area. Since up to this time, Chinese had been the only people fishing commercially out of San Diego, the emptying of their villages left the city without fresh fish. Within a few years, however, other groups took up the trade, most notably the Portuguese.<sup>40</sup>

Although the abalone industry occupied the attention of only one of the villages near San Diego, it is



*The earliest Chinese fish peddlers used "ye-hoe poles" or wooden collars, but by the turn of the century many had switched to horse carts.*

the one that excited the most interest. Prior to their venture into abalone, the ocean fishermen had pursued barracuda, trawling with a line which had numerous hooks. They employed abalone shell as a lure, and perhaps trapping the abalone for lures led them to switch from the fish to the shellfish.<sup>41</sup>

At that time abalone was very plentiful along the California shore and could be had all the way from Tomales Bay in the north to near the tip of the Baja California peninsula in the south. San Diego's Chinese ocean fishermen, in the last two decades before they were driven off the water, regularly took their craft from Monterey halfway down the Baja peninsula in search of the abalone. This gave them a range of about 500 miles of coastline. In addition, these San Diego fishermen probably frequented the camps on San Clemente and Santa Monica Islands. San Clemente Island boasted several of these camps, all located on the western side of the island away from the American mainland. Judging by the solidity of the tent foundations and the amount of crockery left behind, they appear to have been occupied for several months at a time, suggesting that some of the ocean fishermen alternated between the permanent village at Roseville and the island camps according to season.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the village and camps described above, permanent colonies of Chinese abalone fishermen could be found on Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands<sup>43</sup> as well as along the California mainland coast from a little south of Santa Barbara to just north of San Simeon. In the Los Angeles area there was a Chinese fishing colony of some sort, probably also associated with abalone. It was located near Palos Verdes. Further north, Chinese collected much abalone on the rocks near San Francisco, and there was reportedly an anchorage for their junks at what is now Phelan Beach.<sup>44</sup>

Many abalone fishermen worked from the shore

instead of from boats. In the late 1880s, a party of these (perhaps fishermen whose craft had been seized by United States customs officials) regularly employed the coastal schooner *Surprise* to take them from the Santa Barbara area to the islands off the coast. They paid the captain in abalone shells.<sup>45</sup> Around Monterey, Chinese waded into shark-infested waters to secure abalone — and incidentally secured the admiration of a number of American observers as well.<sup>46</sup> Some of those working the coast near San Francisco were certainly shoremen, while others pursued abalone along the rocky coastline in Marin County. Tomales Bay even had a tiny colony of four abalone fishermen in the 1870s.<sup>47</sup>

Just as in the shrimp fishery, the Chinese marketed both the meat and the shell of the abalone. Since residents of California other than Chinese disdained the eating of abalone in those days, most was salted and dried for export to China. At first there was no market for the shells, but in the 1870s, large-scale American exporters discovered a tremendous demand for them on the part of jewelry makers in Europe and the United States east coast, while in China they were wanted for inlay work.<sup>48</sup> Thereafter, the abalone fishermen sold most of their shells to the American wholesalers, although in the Monterey area Chinese curio shops provided another ready market. In 1879, the approximate value of the abalone meat and shells procured by fishermen in California was \$127,705, over two-thirds of which was for the shells.<sup>49</sup> Abalone were so profitable that when Chinese were denied the right to employ ocean-going craft in the fishery, other groups entered the business. Thereafter, some Chinese continued the shore fishery and later, even employed others such as Japanese to dive for deeper specimens. However, the Chinese role in the fishery was not very great once they lost their junks.<sup>50</sup>

The last major area in California where Chinese



fished was along the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers. The Chinese neither founded nor dominated this latter fishery but they did occupy a place of some importance in it until near the turn of the century. The most important fishery of the Sacramento-San Joaquin was the salmon fishery which began about 1847.<sup>51</sup> By 1860, most of the product of this fishery went to local canners. To give an idea of its commercial importance, the total value of salmon canned on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers in the year 1880 was about \$400,935.<sup>52</sup> Chinese, however, did not fish for salmon in the Sacramento-San Joaquin because "no Chinaman (sic) are allowed to participate in it. There is no law regulating the matter, but public

opinion is so strong in relation to it, and there is such a prejudice against the Chinamen, that any attempt on their part to engage in salmon fishing would meet with a summary and probably fatal retaliation."<sup>53</sup>

There were other kinds of fish in the rivers, however, and Chinese were allowed to pursue them. They began fishing in the Sacramento-San Joaquin around 1864. Prior to the mid-1870s, they do not seem to have built any permanent fishing villages along the rivers although they did construct drying and processing sheds for their catch. The fishermen themselves lived on fishing junks.<sup>54</sup> At a later date, some time between the mid-1870s and early 1890s, they began building villages as well, although it is



*Prior to setting out their boats, the fishermen would light a stick of incense in a Chinese temple or in an outdoor shrine like this one in Monterey.*

uncertain where or how many; in fact, a sketch of one plus references to Chinese villages on the river levees are the best indication available that the fishing villages actually existed. By the time these villages were constructed, there must have been several hundred Chinese fishermen on the Sacramento-San Joaquin, but by 1910 or so, most had been driven off the rivers.<sup>55</sup>

The Chinese fishermen on the rivers also used the bag net favored by many of their countrymen on the San Francisco, Monterey, and San Diego bays. They swept the rivers and shallow marshes for their catch and were known to be extremely efficient. They also used fyke nets at certain periods and probably hooks and lines as well. With these several devices they caught sturgeon, shad, smelt, and other fish. Observers claimed they were the most industrious fishermen on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers.<sup>56</sup>

Taking all of these fishing centers together, we must admit that we know far less about the fishermen themselves than we do about the villages they built and the fishing methods they used. This lack of information makes it hard to answer some of the most significant questions about them. For example, it has generally been assumed that all the Chinese in any one given fishing village would either be members of the same clan (and hence, possess the same surname) or come from the same region in China. It is possible that this was the case in the earliest days before large numbers of former railroad laborers moved to the villages. However, we only know the surname and regional affiliation of one of the early fishermen: a man named Chung Yen Hoy of Tung-wan (Tung-kwun) who was one of the first Chinese fishermen in the Monterey area.<sup>57</sup> It can be noted that Chung was not a common surname in this country among Chinese nor did many Chinese immigrants in the United States come from Tung-wan.<sup>58</sup>



Another shred of information on the subject comes from a somewhat later period. In 1877, there was a small fishing colony consisting of four men on Tomales Bay. At least one of these men but probably not all four belonged to the Sam Yup Association; and the surnames of three of the four were, respectively, Liu (Lew), Chung, and Li (Lee). Obviously, the little colony did not follow clan and probably did not follow regional lines.<sup>59</sup>

In the Monterey area fishing villages around the turn of the century, the three most common surnames were Li (Lee), Ch'en (Chin), and Huang (Wong). These three surnames were very common among Chinese in this country, suggesting only that by the turn of the century, the composition of the fishing villages was not too dissimilar from that of the other Chinese communities. No clan or regional association had branches in the Monterey area although three of the *tongs* did: the Ho-sheng t'ang (Hop Sing Tong), Ping-kung t'ang (Bing Kung



Tong), and the Hsin (?) Ts'ui-ying t'ang (San Suey Ying Tong or Sam Suey Ying Tong).<sup>60</sup>

Another question of interest is how many of these fishermen had been fishermen in China. The earliest ones — those who founded the villages — probably had been. But most of the former railway workers who moved into the villages after 1870 had not and probably the disappointed miners who tried their hand at fishing around the mid-1850s had not been either. Surely, a core of seasoned fishermen must have existed in each village to build the fishing craft, teach the others how to fish, how to mend the nets, and how to use the craft. But from 1855 or 1860 on, most of the Chinese fishermen must have been men who learned their trade here.

Fishermen were not the only people who lived in the fishing villages. Many of the earlier fishermen had their wives join them in this country — more, on the average, than did Chinese who pursued other occupations.<sup>61</sup> The presence of wives led to the presence of children. When the former miners and railroad workers began moving into the villages, however, the proportion of complete families became smaller. Many of these newcomers had originally planned to spend only a few years in this country engaged in occupations not suitable to regular family life. Once they took up fishing, they began to think of bringing wives over but United States immigration restrictions for the most part prevented this.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to wives and children, other non-fishing residents of the villages included people who helped process the catch, such as shrimp hullers and shrimp dryers in the shrimp camps.<sup>63</sup> There were also merchants in the larger villages who operated shops catering to the fishermen's needs. Several villages had a temple and the temple would have a caretaker. At least one village also had a rudimentary school for the village children — an American couple offered lessons in English and village elders seem also

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*Chinese were the most important component of the labor force in California's salmon canning industry in the nineteenth century.*

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to have hired an instructor for Chinese studies.<sup>64</sup> Finally, in the 1870s the main shrimping village in Marin County is supposed to have been used by American railroad entrepreneurs as a landing point for Chinese laborers they were smuggling in to work on the railroads — workers above and beyond the thousands that entered legally via San Francisco.<sup>65</sup>

Life in the villages for the average fisherman was hard, but under normal circumstances it could be counted on to bring in a steady income. Around the turn of the century, the annual income averaged \$400-\$500 for the Monterey area villages. An income of \$1,000, attained by a few, was considered quite good.<sup>66</sup> But the fisherman had few expenses, particularly if his family were not with him in the United States — the dollars he sent back to China went much further than they would have in this country. Several people lived together in each cabin — generally, at least the four or five members of a crew and at times, far more.<sup>67</sup> Since the cabins were built by the fishermen, the principal rent expense was for the land, and the amount any one individual had to pay was reasonably small.<sup>68</sup>

For food, the fishermen had, of course, fish (or

shrimp, squid, or abalone). In addition, he or his wife and children might collect seaweed and other marine life. During the off-season — usually the two or three months of the heaviest rains — they would start vegetable gardens which could be kept going with less attention once the fishing season began again. Many of the fishermen also kept chickens and ducks. And periodically, several people might chip in to buy a pig. Other expenses included boats — rather, the wood to build their sampans and junks — and nets (some of which were imported from China), and articles such as clothing, rice, and tea. But the frugal fisherman (and most were frugal, by necessity) could save most of his annual income or, as was more common, send it back to China to help out his parents, wife, and relatives.<sup>69</sup>

One matter of particular concern to the fishermen was the marketing of their catch. On the local level, the fishermen sold a portion fresh to Chinese fish peddlers usually at an established fresh fish wholesale market such as one on Vallejo Street in San Francisco. The fish peddlers were quite numerous until about 1910. In the nineteenth century, they carried the fish in two baskets suspended from a pole or wooden collar. Each basket could hold about 100 pounds of fish. Later, some acquired push carts and later, even trucks. Around the turn of the century, shrimp purchased from these peddlers cost ten cents a bowl.<sup>70</sup>

The fishermen sold as much fresh fish to the peddlers as possible since the fresh fish and shrimp commanded the highest price, but the market for it was always much smaller than the total catch. The fish (and squid, shrimp, abalone, and so forth) that they could not sell fresh had to be salted and dried. This accounted for eighty percent or more of the catch. The dried product was most often sold to wholesale houses, most of which were also owned by Chinese. A few of these wholesale houses still exist,

such as San Francisco's Lincoln Shrimp.<sup>71</sup> In Monterey, where Italians displaced Chinese squid fishermen around 1905, Chinese squid wholesalers continued to control distribution until about 1932.<sup>72</sup>

On the San Francisco Bay, Chinese wholesalers frequently made the rounds of the shrimp camps on junks, selected what they wanted to buy, and then brought their purchases to San Francisco. At one period, Chinese were not allowed to operate craft large enough to do this and so the fishermen hired Caucasian captains to take their dried product to San Francisco. The Chinese wholesalers then shipped most of this dried product to China aboard major carriers such as the American-owned Pacific Mail Steamship Company and later Chinese-owned China Mail Steamship Company.<sup>73</sup> A much smaller proportion of the dried product went to other Chinese communities in the continental United States and elsewhere in the world such as Hawaii, Canada, and Australia.<sup>74</sup>

Aside from the fishermen, fish peddlers, and wholesalers, other Chinese were a significant part of California's fishing industry. There were, for example, the people who helped prepare the catch for export, most notably the hundreds of people who at one time or another worked as shrimp sorters and shrimp hullers. In the nineteenth century this was usually done by shoremen connected with the various fishing crews but during the Depression of the 1930s, elderly women and young children in San Francisco did much of the work.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, as noted above, a major carrier in the twentieth century of the salted and dried squid and fish was the China Mail Steamship Company whose owners were Chinese and Chinese American. One of these, the capitalist Liu Hsing (Lew Hing) also helped found a sardine cannery in the Monterey area during World War I: Bayside, which canned under the Cypress label.<sup>76</sup>

*Yee Won, a major wholesaler of dried squid in the Monterey area during the 1920s, stands before his loaded truck just before taking the squid to San Francisco for trans-shipment to China.*



Finally, Chinese were the most important component of the labor force in California's salmon canning industry in the nineteenth century. In the late 1880s, for example, eighty-six percent of the work force in the canneries was Chinese. Their importance came from the fact that they were willing to work for something less than the inflated wages demanded by non-Chinese. In addition, they were more dependable employees, and unlikely to quit in the middle of the season.<sup>77</sup>

In terms of broader California and United States history, the greatest significance of the Chinese fishermen lies in their discovery and development of many of California's fishing grounds. In addition, they founded the commercial fishing industry of San Diego, the Monterey area, and San Francisco/San Pablo Bay. As we have seen, these were of no small commercial importance while the Chinese dominated them and even after the Chinese were driven out, these fisheries continued to be important. The



Chinese turned California into one of this country's most important shrimp producing states during the nineteenth century, and squid fishing is still important to the Monterey economy. After Chinese were driven out of abalone fishing in the 1890s, other groups tried to take it over until the number of abalone had declined to the extent that the industry was no longer profitable.<sup>78</sup>

This brings up one final point: the frequent accusation that Chinese fishing methods depleted the supply of fish and seafood available off the California coast and in her bays and rivers. This accusation was used as the principal justification for driving the Chinese out of the fishing industry and has clouded their contribution to this day. Research on the Chinese fishermen reveals a number of contradictory statements and actions related to the charge of over-fishing. For example, there was a period when Chinese were permitted to use fyke nets on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers. When they did so, they were accused of depleting the rivers but at other times, when Chinese were not allowed to use these nets and Caucasians did use them instead (rather extensively), there was little concern on the part of authorities about over-fishing and no talk of passing laws to stop it.<sup>79</sup>

Abalone presents another kind of example: when Chinese were fishing for them, a number of authorities feared so much abalone was being taken that they would disappear entirely from the California waters. Yet even though Chinese lost their importance in the abalone fishery around 1890, the fishery continued to be profitable for at least another twelve years.<sup>80</sup> In a word, the over-fishing appears to be something non-Chinese were in part responsible for.

Another point worth mentioning is the fact that the California Department of Fish and Game at times put out regulations that were inconsistent with its fears concerning the fish. For example, around the

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*Research on the Chinese fishermen reveals a number of contradictory statements and actions related to the charge of over-fishing.*

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turn of the century a number of official reports stated Chinese were emptying San Francisco Bay of fish by catching young fish — catching bigger fish was all right. Yet at this same period, Chinese shrimpers were required to throw back any big fish they caught and permitted to keep the small ones; and were prosecuted if they failed to do this.<sup>81</sup>

While the Chinese quite probably over-fished certain areas at certain times, the matter has been greatly exaggerated and unfairly so. On the whole, then, looked at from every standpoint, it can be concluded that the Chinese contribution to California's fishing industry has been a decidedly positive one and one which deserves wider recognition.

Photographs appearing on pages 146 and 150 are from the Pat M. Hathaway Collection, Pacific Grove, California. The view of a shrimping village on page 145 is courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, San Francisco. The photo on page 153 is from the Jack H. Yee Collection. All others are from the CHS Library.

## Notes

1. See Thomas W. Chinn, H. Mark Lai and Philip P. Choy (eds.), *A History of the Chinese in California: a Syllabus* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1969), pp. 38-41; and Robert Nash, "The Chinese Shrimp Fishery of California" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973).
2. Interview with Frank Quan (shrimper on San Francisco Bay), January, 1979 and interview with Ben Hoang (descendant of Monterey-area fishermen), September and June, 1977 and April, 1979. Don M. Stewart, *Frontier Post: a Chapter in San Diego's History* (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1965), p. 15 informs us that the redwood was rot-resistant and after being weathered by the salt air, even acted as a fire retardant.
3. Interview with L. Michael Axeford (archaeologist who has excavated some of the temporary camps), March and June, 1979; and Jeffrey Bingham (California State Park Archaeologist), "Brief History and Description (of China Camp in Marin County)" in "Application for Registration of Historical Landmark," September, 1978, pp. 2-4.
4. Interview with L. Michael Axeford.
5. John S. Hittell, *The Commerce and Industries of the Pacific Coast of North America* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1882), pp. 349-354; and Arthur F. McEvoy, "In Places Men Reject: the Chinese Fishermen at San Diego, 1870-1893" (unpublished manuscript, San Diego Historical Society Library and Manuscripts Collection), pp. 1-37. A shorter version of this article was published in *The Journal of San Diego History*, Vol. XXIII (Fall, 1977), pp. 12-24.
6. Chinn, Lai and Choy, *Chinese in California*, pp. 36-41.
7. Gladys Hansen (ed.), *San Francisco: the Bay and Its Cities* (New York: Hastings House, 1973), p. 291; and George Brown Goode (ed.), *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887), pp. 622-626.
8. *Chambers's Journal*, No. 3 (January 21, 1854), Vol. 1, p. 48; and McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," p. 15.
9. Interviews with Ben Hoang.
10. Dorothy H. Huggins, *Continuation of the Annals of San Francisco* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1939), p. 79; and *Chambers's Journal*, Vol. 1, p. 48.
11. Nash, "Chinese Shrimp Fishery," pp. 125-127.
12. Huggins, *Annals of San Francisco*, p. 79.
13. Hittell, *Commerce and Industries* pp. 249-254; McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," pp. 19-20; and Philip L. Weaver, "Salt Water Fisheries of the Pacific Coast" in *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 20 (1892), p. 159. Estimates of the number of fishermen vary greatly. One source even claims that 10,000 Chinese shrimpers lived in Marin County at one time, but judging from the number of boats and other factors, this appears unreasonable. The total number of fishermen of all nationalities operating in California waters in 1888 was about 5,000. See United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Report of the Commission for 1888 (Part XVI)* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892), p. 21.
14. Corinne K. Hoexter, *From Canton to California* (New York: Four Winds Press, 1976), p. 101; and William J. Courtney, *San Francisco's Anti-Chinese Ordinances* (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1974), p. 9.
15. *Chambers's Journal*, Vol. 1, p. 48.
16. Hoexter, *Canton to California*, p. 101; and Courtney, *Anti-Chinese Ordinances*, p. 9.
17. Nash, "Chinese Shrimp Fishery," pp. 132-133. For an example of this, see David Starr Jordan, "The Fisheries of California" in *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 20 (1892), pp. 473-474.
18. Nash, "Chinese Shrimp Fishery," pp. 133-139; and Courtney, *Anti-Chinese Ordinances*, p. 34.
19. *Ibid.*; State of California vs. Ah Chung et al (Contra Costa County Superior Court U1828), February, 1890; and Habeus Corpus U914, Contra Costa County Superior Court (Ah Chow et al for writ of habeus corpus), June, 1910.
20. Nash, "Chinese Shrimp Fishery," pp. 137-139; McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," pp. 33-34; and interviews with Ben Hoang.
21. Interview with Frank Quan.
22. *Ibid.*; and U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Report, 1888*, pp. 146-153.
23. Interview with Frank Quan; and Nash, pp. 138-139.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 807-810; and interview with Frank Quan.
26. Interview with Frank Quan; and "Transcript of an Interview with Mr. David Chan of Lincoln Shrimp conducted by Robert A. Nash and Thomas W. Chinn with Leone Nash, January 23, 1970" in *Bulletin of the Chinese Historical Society of America*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (pp. 1-8) and No. 5 (pp. 6-8).
27. Hittell, *Commerce and Industries*, pp. 349-354 and pp. 366-367; Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, p. 657, pp. 798-799, and pp. 807-810; and interview with Frank Quan.
28. Courtney, *Anti-Chinese Ordinances*, p. 51; and *Daily Alta California*, October 7 and October 9, 1864.
29. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 807-809.
30. Interview with Frank Quan.
31. Interviews with Ben Hoang.
32. William Millis, "When Chinatown Burned" in *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, March 25, 1941; and *Herald Weekend Magazine*, November 16, 1975, pp. 1-10.
33. Interviews with Ben Hoang; and Nash, "Chinese Shrimp Fishery," p. 22. The last Chinese fishing colony in the Monterey area consisted of three men — relatives by blood or

- marriage — who had a cabin and boats and worked the bay in the 1920s.
34. In the 1880s, these fishermen caught flounder, rockfish, smelt, squid, abalone, octopus, crayfish, and crabs. See Hittell, *Commerce and Industries*, pp. 249-254; and Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, p. 657 and pp. 798-799.
  35. Prior to the 1920s, most squid fishermen sold their catch to the Chinese wholesale houses in San Francisco. In the 1920s, however, a wholesale merchant established himself in Monterey. Interviews with Ben Hoang; and letter to the author from Jack K. Yee, June, 1979.
  36. McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," p. 12; Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 622-626; and Stewart, *Frontier Post*, p. 17.
  37. Jordan, *Overland Monthly*, pp. 473-74; and McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," pp. 17-18.
  38. McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," pp. 19-36.
  39. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-37; and Stewart, *Frontier Post*, p. 17.
  40. McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," p. 37.
  41. Stewart, *Frontier Post*, p. 17.
  42. Interviews with L. Michael Axeford.
  43. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 662-626. These island fishermen also took quantities of rockfish. See Hittell, *Commerce and Industries*, pp. 349-354.
  44. Jordan, *Overland Monthly*, p. 474; Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 622-626; and Hansen, *San Francisco*, p. 291. Over twenty discarded stone anchors and other artifacts from these fishermen have been located in the waters between Los Angeles and the Santa Barbara Islands. Letters to the author from F. J. Frost, June and August, 1979.
  45. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 622-626.
  46. Hoexter, *Canton to California*, pp. 98-101.
  47. J. P. Munro-Fraser (ed.), *History of Marin County, California* (Petaluma, Ca.: Charmaina Burdell Veronda, 1972 reprint of the 1880 edition), pp. 249-250.
  48. McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," p. 4. The shells then became more valuable than the abalone meat. The business was so profitable that a number of Americans in the Los Angeles area began pursuing abalone but taking California as a whole, the Chinese outnumbered the Americans in terms of numbers of fishermen, value of catch, and numbers of vessels employed. For a while, however, two-thirds of the abalone that passed through Los Angeles was taken by Americans and only one-third by Chinese. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 622-626.
  49. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, p. 624.
  50. Nash, "The Abalone Fishery" (unpublished paper, archives of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California).
  51. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California (1860-1890)*, Vol. 7 (Santa Barbara: Wallace Hebbard, 1970), p. 149 notes that commercial salmon fishing on the Sacramento River began no later than 1850. I have even seen an account that claims it began in 1847.
  52. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 1, p. 753.
  53. *Ibid.*, pp. 735-737.
  54. *Ibid.*
  55. Painting by Charles Graham, "The Sacramento River" in *The Wave*, December 19, 1896, p. 15; Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 1, pp. 735-737; and John Thompson, "The Settlement Geography of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California" (unpublished PhD thesis, Stanford University, 1957). The latter mentions Chinese towns on the levees of the Sacramento-San Joaquin although it does not discuss the livelihood of the inhabitants. See pp. 318-323.
  56. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 1, p. 738.
  57. Interviews with Ben Hoang (grandson of Chung Yen Hoy).
  58. Chinn, Lai and Choy, *Chinese in California*, pp. 2-4 and pp. 66-67.
  59. Munro-Fraser, *Marin County*, pp. 249-250.
  60. Interviews with Ben Hoang.
  61. McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," pp. 19-20 and *Herald Weekend Magazine*, November 16, 1975, pp. 1-10 quoting an 1875 report on Monterey-area Chinese fishermen.
  62. As Courtney, *Anti-Chinese Ordinances*, suggests (pp. 22-23 and p. 43), from at least 1854 on, it was generally assumed by non-Chinese that most if not all Chinese women coming to the United States were prostitutes, and regulations were enacted making it very difficult for Chinese women to enter the country. In 1882, Chinese Exclusion began which specifically forbade any Chinese classified as laborers to bring their wives into this country.
  63. Nash, thesis (hereinafter referred to simply as "Nash"), p. 293 and p. 301; Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 807-810; and Weaver, *Overland Monthly*, p. 159.
  64. Bingham, "Brief History," pp. 2-4. An 1890s photograph of the Point San Pedro shrimp camps in the collection of the National Maritime Museum in San Francisco shows what appears to be this couple, several village children, and a Chinese dressed in the clothes of a scholar. If the latter was not a teacher, he must have been what the 1880 Census referred to as an "instructor in Joss worship." George Epidendio, "The Death of China Camp" in *San Francisco Magazine*, October, 1962, pp. 17-19 and p. 34 makes an oblique reference to a teacher for Chinese studies.
  65. Epidendio, "Death of China Camp," pp. 17-19. At the period in question, ships were limited as to the number of Chinese passengers they could bring into the country and other regulations were in effect hampering immigration — hence, the motivation for smuggling.



66. Interviews with Ben Hoang.
67. Nash, pp. 158-162. As for the boats themselves, these were constructed by the fishermen out of redwood boards (heated then bent to shape). The craft, sampans and junks, ranged from eight feet in length for the smallest sampan to sixty feet for the largest, three-masted sea-going junk. Masts and rudders were made out of iron-wood imported from China. Sails were of the Chinese "lateen" style with bamboo stays. These craft are supposed to have been extremely well made, and the larger junks could and sometimes did cross the ocean. McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," pp. 12-24; and Stewart, *Frontier Post*, pp. 16-17. Sampans without sails were sculled out of the stern.
68. *Ibid.*; and Epidendio, "Death of China Camp," pp. 17-19 and p. 34. In the 1880s, the lessor of the land on which the Point San Pedro villages were built is supposed to have made 100% profit off the rent charged to the Chinese fishermen.
69. Interviews with Ben Hoang; interview with Frank Quan; McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," and Weaver, *Overland Monthly*, pp. 159-161.
70. Interview with Ethel Kerns, November, 1977; McEvoy, "Chinese Fishermen at San Diego," pp. 9-10; Weaver, *Overland Monthly* pp. 18-19; Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 1, pp. 737-738; and U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Report . . . 1888*, pp. 146-153. Retail fish markets were controlled by people from the Hsiang-shan district in China's Kwangtung province. See Nash, pp. 157-158. In addition, peddlers in San Francisco may all have been men surnamed Chao (Chew) from the Hsin-hui (Sunwui) district — that, at any rate, was true of vegetable peddlers from at least the turn of the century on. See interview with Chew Long, June, 1978.
71. Interviews with Ben Hoang; and Nash, pp. 157-158.
72. One of the last large-scale wholesalers of dried squid operated out of the Monterey area. Named Yee Won, he was in business from at least 1924 to 1932. He owned a general goods store catering to fishermen as well as wholesaling squid. Even later, some of Monterey's fresh fish (albacore and salmon) was marketed by Regal Seafood, a business owned by Chinese Americans (Howard and Edwin Low and three others) which was still in existence as late as 1978. Interview and letter from Jack Yee, June, 1979 and interview with Howard Low, September, 1977.
73. Interviews with Ben Hoang; and Nash, pp. 157-158.
74. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 2, pp. 807-810.
75. Interview with Frank Quan; and Nash, pp. 165-167.
76. Interviews with Ben Hoang; Liu Ling, *Hua-ch'iao jen-wu chih* (Los Angeles: East-West Culture Publishing Association, 1949), p. 251. Other major investors in Monterey's Bayside were Ben Hoang, Lew Hing Dat, and Er Tuck. Thomas Foon Chew was also briefly involved. (Both Thomas Foon Chew and Lew Hing had large fruit and vegetable canneries elsewhere, Lew Hing in Oakland and Thomas Foon Chew around Palo Alto and on the Sacramento River.)
77. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 1, pp. 747-748; and Nash, p. 18.
78. Chinn, Lai and Choy, *Chinese in California*, p. 41.
79. Goode, *Fishery Industries*, Sec. 5, Vol. 1, pp. 737-738; and U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Report . . . 1888*, pp. 146-153.
80. In 1902, abalone had become so scarce that United States authorities restricted the taking of most abalone under fifteen inches in circumference. Chinn, Lai and Choy, p. 41. California later forbade the export of any abalone. Interview with Gee Guey, November, 1978.
81. Nash, pp. 134-137; State of California vs. Ah Chung et al, February 1890; and Ah Chowe et al for writ of habeas corpus, June, 1910.

# TRENOR PARK

## A New Englander in California

Gold and the business of gold were the twin magnets that drew literally thousands of men, and later their wives and children, to San Francisco in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was 1848 when gold was first discovered at Sutter's Fort in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Four years later, the small hamlet of San Francisco, which provided banking, retailing and other services for the mines, found its population increased thirty-four times.

To understate the case, San Francisco in the 1850s was a boom town. Recent histories have called it the "instant city."<sup>1</sup> During its early years, the Bay City's economic atmosphere was one of energy and optimism favoring material growth. This atmosphere was fueled by a spirit of rampant individualism in which adventurers, businessmen, gold seekers and pleasure seekers were motivated by a search for wealth. Trenor William Park, a native New Englander, was such an individual.

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A man of modest means when he arrived on the West Coast, Trenor Park left it eleven years later a wealthy financier with connections and aspirations that spanned a continent. His story is that of a man whose talents were particularly adapted to the energetic atmosphere of early San Francisco. He brought many of his relatives with him to California, and his California experience exemplifies the important role of the extended family in mid-nineteenth century America.

Fortunately the story of this New Englander's California career is also preserved and symbolized in two historic houses listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of which is in California. *Falkirk* in San Rafael is an 1888 mansion in Queen Anne and Eastlake style which Park's second wife built with her inheritance from his estate. The house was designed by architect Clinton Day.<sup>2</sup> Located at 1408 Mission Avenue, it is now owned and maintained by the City of San Rafael.

The Park-McCullough House in North Bennington, Vermont, was built by Park in 1865 when he returned from San Francisco. Designed by architects Diaper and Dudley, this house, in the Second Empire and Mansard style, is now maintained as an historic site and community center by a non-profit corpora-



*Trenor Park, a native of Vermont, came to California in 1852.*





*In a photograph taken shortly before he left for California, Park is shown with his wife, Laura, and daughter Eliza. Unlike many others who came West, Park had his family with him from the beginning.*

tion which owns and administers the house.

Trenor Park was a lawyer in 1851 when he made the decision to go to California. He was practicing law in Bennington, Vermont, in the shadows of the Green Mountains, only a few miles from Woodford, Vermont, the town of his birth.

Park was an ambitious man — even driven. Perhaps he was hard to get along with, but he was also energetic, imaginative and creative. For him and for other men like him, San Francisco represented opportunity. There were fortunes to be made in banking, real estate and commerce, not to mention the gold mines themselves. But life in the West was precarious, and for every man who made a fortune, there were many more who returned home with empty pockets, disillusioned with America's newest

land of promised plenty. As one New Englander wrote: "I think this is the greatest country in the world, tho many who come here to make a fortune in a year or two are disappointed . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps one of the most important things that Park had going for him was luck. Hiland Hall, his father-in-law, was head of the California Land Commission appointed by President Fillmore in 1851. Hall arrived in San Francisco about six months before Park and did much of the scouting for his son-in-law, writing him that there were good opportunities there for a bright young lawyer.

Also, Trenor Park, unlike many others, had his family with him from the beginning. During the gold rush, most men came to California alone; they later called for their wives and children. The ratio of

## Trenor Park

men to women in San Francisco in 1852 was six to one, and the lack of family contributed to the gambling, drinking, street life and loneliness.<sup>4</sup>

What induced Park to bring his family is uncertain. Perhaps it was the slight lowering of the risks brought about by the previous presence of his father-in-law. Or, it may have been that young Park (he was twenty-eight when he left for California) realized a need for the constancy and support of home and family. Whatever the reason, he brought with him not only his wife and three-year-old daughter, Eliza, but also his mother-in-law, a sister-in-law, and a close friend of the family, Charles Lincoln. On April 26, 1852, in New York harbor this group of Vermonters boarded the steamship *Illinois* en route to the Isthmus of Panama.

The trip lasted about two weeks, and each member of the Park entourage had his or her own version of the pleasures or pains of the voyage. Family friend Charles Lincoln pronounced the *Illinois* "very prosperous" and a "large and splendid ship"<sup>5</sup> Eliza Park wrote in her memoirs that the ship was "small, crowded, dirty, with a smell of its own warranted to produce sea sickness of the first order."<sup>6</sup> The amount of sea sickness which each endured no doubt affected their perceptions of the voyage. Indeed, Eliza's mother, Laura, was seasick for almost the whole trip. Later Laura wrote: "I do not think it pays to make that awful journey . . . I will not do it again."<sup>7</sup> However, while Mrs. Park was below and feeling very unhappy, Charlie Lincoln was on deck passing among the passengers, chatting with each and paying particular attention to the many women who were coming west to meet their husbands.

When the *Illinois* docked at the Isthmus, the Park family jockeyed with other passengers to get room aboard one of the barges that would take them up the Chagres River. For Charlie Lincoln, the barge ride was as much fun as the steamboat. Reclining with a

bottle of claret, he enjoyed watching and listening to the six Panamanians who powered the barge. Despite the tropical scene, he imagined himself on the Rialto in Venice.

Trenor Park was more realistic, and for him the barge trip may have been more than just a joy ride. The particular barge in which he and his party were traveling was occupied by some of the most aristocratic of travelers, including Fernando Wood, a New York City investor who was going west to drop great sums in San Francisco real estate. Park may have used this unique social occasion to further his own financial ends, for a few days after arriving in San Francisco, he was acting as Fernando Wood's real estate agent.

Park and his family landed in San Francisco on May 22, 1852, aboard the *Golden Gate* from Panama, and within two weeks the young New Englander had won a victory in court against one of the well-known attorneys in the city, James McDougal. A few months later, Trenor Park joined San Francisco's most prestigious law firm, that of Halleck, Peachy and Billings.

Throughout their first summer in San Francisco, the Park family lived in a small rented house which, according to Charlie Lincoln, "a span of donkeys could draw all over the world." For what must have seemed the extremely high sum of \$65.00 a month, the family rented four rooms. The space had to accommodate not only Trenor, his wife and daughter, Eliza, but also the entourage which had accompanied them to San Francisco. Mrs. Park hung blankets across the width of the rooms, thereby creating separate sleeping quarters upstairs for her husband, her father, Hiland Hall, and Charlie Lincoln. She and the other women slept downstairs in a room which doubled as dining room, kitchen and bedroom.<sup>8</sup>

Years later, Eliza recalled her family's first home in San Francisco:

*"I have lived through it all—  
I have waited for this day with patience,  
and meet it with a cheerful spirit"*

The first memory is of a little sandy yard back of a small frame house somewhere in the sandhills where I played and was happy, not overburdened with the problems the elder members of the family had to meet in adapting themselves to so new and strange a life. Housekeeping must have had unforeseen difficulties in the surrounding conditions, and the high cost of every commodity.<sup>9</sup>

Undoubtedly Eliza and the others were pleased when Park's admission to the Halleck, Peachy and Billings law firm allowed the family to move into a larger house in fashionable Pleasant Valley on Tehama Street near Third. Some things did not change, however. According to Eliza Park, there were still unlimited sand lots on every side except across the front "where my Mother made a garden with wonderful roses and sweet smelling flowers." Eliza continued:

The street was boarded over, and I can recall the sound of the rattling watercart as it came to deliver water bought by the pail for domestic purposes. And I can hear now the echoing footsteps of my Father on the plank walk as I sat beside my Mother listening for it in anxious hours later on when his life was threatened . . .<sup>10</sup>

The threat on Eliza's father's life probably occurred during 1855. Violence, threats and duels were common in early San Francisco, and Trenor Park was as vulnerable as anyone to this method of settling arguments. What makes Park's involvement particularly interesting is that he often responded by attempting to out-manipulate his opponents in the courtroom or at the bargaining table.

Park's troubles began in the winter of 1855 when he was charged with embezzlement by the receiver (treasurer) of Adams & Co., Alfred Cohen. Park had been serving as a lawyer for Adams & Co., and according to his testimony, Cohen had attempted to bribe him. The Vermonter stated that Cohen offered him \$153,000 as part of a deal to help keep the bank, Adams & Co. afloat.<sup>11</sup> The offer was made at a late

night meeting held at Park's house for the purpose of staving off an anticipated run on the bank. That meeting did not go smoothly. An agreement was not reached, and the next day the banking house of Adams & Co. closed its doors never to reopen.

Alfred Cohen was undoubtedly dissatisfied with Park for refusing to participate in the proposed deal. His charges of embezzlement hurt Park's credibility, reputation and pride. The young New England lawyer and his family had been planning to leave that spring on a visit to the East. After Cohen's embezzlement charge, they managed a quick exit. Rumors spread that Park had sneaked out of the city after hiding for three days aboard a steamer.

While on the East Coast, Park spent much of his time in Boston consulting with Alvin Adams, owner of the Boston-based Adams Express Company, of which Adams & Co. of San Francisco was a branch. Mr. Adams and his Boston firm were liable for the debts of the San Francisco bank. Park returned from the East with a power of attorney from Adams. His job was to attempt to work out financial settlements so as to prevent Mr. Adams and his company, the Adams Express, from having to pay the West coast creditors in full.

When Park arrived back in California that June, \$43,000 which had been on hand at Adams & Co. the night of the failure, was mysteriously missing. Alfred Cohen had supposedly been holding the money in trust for the Court awaiting distribution to the creditors. Cohen also could not put his hands on the bank's books which would show exactly how much money had been in the vaults the night of the failure.<sup>12</sup> It now looked as if Mr. Cohen and his cohorts had pocketed a great deal of the gold and dust belonging to Adams & Co. Park instituted an embezzlement suit against Cohen to recover these funds.

That summer must have been an extremely difficult one for Trenor Park. To begin with, Alfred



Cohen's brother, Frederick, knocked Park down in the street. A duel or fight could have followed but instead Park walked away from his assailant. Park's ability to turn the other cheek may seem admirable from a historical perspective, but there was another point of view at the time. Park's law partner, A. C. Peachy, was a southerner, and he felt that Park's refusal to fight or duel was a disgrace to the law firm. On August 15, 1855, Trenor Park was forced to leave the firm of Halleck, Peachy and Billings. That month, Park's wife wrote: "Poor Train, he has had enough to kill any one man."<sup>13</sup>

However, on March 10, 1856, before a crowded courtroom the young New Englander delivered his final arguments in the trial of Alfred Cohen for embezzlement. His case was very convincing, because he had been aided by a curious stroke of fate. On February 28th, a laborer found a set of books, mysteriously sewn up in a cloth bag, floating in San Francisco Bay near the North Point Dock Warehouse. The books were, in fact, the much publicized account books which showed conclusively the assets of Adams & Co. on the night of the failure.

The story of the discovery made headlines in James King's *Daily Evening Bulletin*. A friend of the laborer had first come to King late at night with the news of the discovery. The finder was not ready to hand over the books immediately, so later that same night a meeting was held at Trenor Park's house. According to King: "Park came right to the point by asking the fellow his price."<sup>14</sup>

With the books in hand Park's case was made. Three hours after the final arguments, a jury returned a verdict of guilty, and Alfred Cohen was convicted of embezzling \$290,000 of the assets of Adams & Co.

For Trenor Park, the trial against Alfred Cohen was not just a professional victory; it was also a personal triumph. Cohen's charge of embezzlement had lowered the young lawyer's standing in the commun-

ity; he had lost his position with the best law firm in town; his financial situation was precarious and his pride had been offended. In his arguments before the jury, Park referred to the personal animosity which existed between himself and Cohen. Park's words took on a self-congratulatory tone as he referred to his anticipated victory against Mr. Cohen: "I have lived through it all — I have waited for this day in patience, and meet it with a cheerful spirit."<sup>15</sup>

Park also used his arguments before the jury to refuse the challenge by Cohen's counsel of another fight or duel. In answering his opponent's call to fight, Park referred to his New England education and "the laws of my native state — the good old state of Vermont." "To die as a fool dieth" would be the consequence of a duel according to Park.<sup>16</sup>

The Vermont lawyer was a slight man, not much more than five feet in height and not more than one hundred and thirty pounds. One might guess what the odds would have been if Park were involved in a fist fight. Whether it was his New England upbringing, his moral code or just the fact of his size, the aversion Park had to fighting meant that he was probably even more anxious than most to emerge victorious from the courtroom.

After the trial, James King of William escorted the triumphant lawyer out onto the crowded street. Needless to say, Mr. Cohen's counsel was leaving at the same time, and the crowd held its breath for a long moment as the two lawyers crossed paths. A second challenge was not offered and there were no reports of any fighting.<sup>17</sup>

To people like King, a newspaper editor and supporter of local municipal reform, the young lawyer from Vermont appeared to be supporting the cause of reform in San Francisco. To him, Trenor Park was the champion of the merchants and citizens who had lost their shirts in the banking failure.

However, Trenor Park was not a reformer; he was

*"I had been absent from the city  
nearly eight months, and it had grown  
almost out of my knowledge"*

not a champion of the people. At another of his late night meetings, he struck a deal with the bank, Palmer, Cook & Co. (where Alfred Cohen had deposited some of the gold from Adams & Co.). According to the agreement, Palmer, Cook & Co. had to pay only half of what they owed the creditors of Adams & Co. The "shenanigans" of this meeting were much criticized by the reform press and perhaps with justification.<sup>18</sup> Trenor Park's accounts with Joseph Palmer show \$14,000 to Park's credit from the assets of Adams & Co. "not otherwise accounted for."<sup>19</sup> Although the creditors of Adams & Co. received hardly anything on their claims, the Vermont lawyer was more fortunate.

In his dealings with friends and associates, there was evident in Park an independence and a clarity of purpose related to financial gain and individual advancement which often superseded loyalties and alliances. Among the young lawyer's peers it is almost impossible to discern a strong pattern of support.

When Park had been with Halleck, Peachy and Billings for less than a year, he asked a friend and fellow lawyer in Vermont, Oscar Lovell Shafter, to join him in San Francisco and assist him with legal work. Upon arriving in California, Shafter was very impressed with his boss, Trenor Park, and he wrote of him: "Park is very smart and efficient — more so than all the rest (Halleck, Peachy and Billings) put together."<sup>22</sup> In 1858 the two Vermonters joined in the firm of C.H.S. Williams, Shafter and Park. At that time, Shafter noted that his associate from the Green Mountain State was a "very available business associate."<sup>23</sup> In the last firm which the Vermonters formed, Shafter, Heydenfeldt and Park, there was a great deal of animosity and resentment on the part of the other members of the firm toward Trenor Park, and in the end it took a court arbitrator to distribute the effects, property and assets of Shafter, Heydenfeldt & Park.<sup>24</sup>

If Trenor Park was an individualist whose motivation seemed to stem from a search for material rewards, he was not alone in early San Francisco. Indeed the prevailing mood of the city was one which centered upon self-aggrandizement. As one New England resident of early San Francisco wrote: "There was never a community where self exalted its horn so much in fact as it does here. Men talk with their fellows in the streets but for a purpose; . . . It is all the result of refined calculation relating to personal gain."<sup>25</sup>

Some of the largest fortunes in San Francisco in the 1850s were made by those who invested heavily in real estate.<sup>26</sup> Like many others who were eager to make money, Trenor Park invested in real property. Besides his own home in the fashionable Pleasant Valley, he purchased other residential lots, warehouse and wharf property, ranches outside of town, and a dairy farm in San Rafael. In San Francisco, lots on Powell Street, Sutter Street, Jackson and East Streets belonged to Park in 1861.

He was an absentee landlord much of the time, and a somewhat negligent one. The East Street property contained a warehouse, and in 1863 one of Park's assistants wrote about that piece of property: "The tenants were unwilling to meet any advance in rents and from the condition of the property I could not blame them."<sup>27</sup>

Although land set the stage for the designs and fortunes of growth, it was the buildings themselves which symbolized the pride and spirit of the city. Herein were exhibited the riches accumulated; herein was symbolized the optimism of builders, bankers and financiers; herein were goals realized and civilization proclaimed.

Charlie Lincoln wrote in 1853: "I had been absent from the city nearly eight months, and it had grown almost out of my knowledge; hundreds of brick buildings have gone up, the largest and the pride of

*Charles Lincoln was an old family friend of the Parks and came to San Francisco with them.*



the city will be the one Park is erecting.”<sup>28</sup>

Early in 1853, before Trenor Park had left Halleck, Peachy and Billings, he and Frederick Billings obtained a lease on a piece of property on the corner of Washington and Montgomery Streets in the heart of San Francisco’s banking district. Fernando Wood owned the property, and because Park, the young lawyer, was Wood’s real estate agent, he was in a good position to make a deal favorable to Billings and himself.

On this piece of land, Halleck, Peachy, Billings and Park built a \$300,000 building known as the “Montgomery Block.” As Lincoln indicated it was the pride of the city. It was four stories high and measured 157 feet by 122 feet. It was completed in the late fall of 1853, and a housewarming was held two days before Christmas.<sup>29</sup>

“Tubbed coco palms, sofas in red velvet, valanced rockers and tall brass cuspidors” filled the second floor lobby.<sup>30</sup> Descriptions of the building project a

sense of the monumental, the genteel and the elegant. In his book, *Ark of Empire*, Idwall Jones writes: “The Block was a manifestation of its (San Francisco’s) solidity. It was the assembly place of the City . . . the meeting point of all professions, the clearinghouse of all commerce and trade, the nub from which life might be touched at all points.”<sup>31</sup>

Halleck, Peachy, Billings and Park moved into offices on the third floor, and later Park and Shafter had four rooms in the Block which Charlie Lincoln described as “immense rooms about twenty feet high, gorgeously furnished with carpets and sofas of the costliest description, lighted with gas, etc.”<sup>32</sup>

For Trenor Park the completion of the Montgomery Block was evidence of his firm’s and, more particularly, his own accomplishments and talents. Indeed, although the building itself was primarily Henry Halleck’s dream, Charlie Lincoln in his letters to his sister writes of “his (Park’s) new building.” Park did have a one-quarter interest in the building, which he apparently received in exchange for the lease on the property. However, according to Park’s account book, Halleck eventually paid almost \$100,000 of the \$300,000 construction cost. Another \$100,000 was borrowed, and the three members of the firm paid the remaining \$100,000.<sup>33</sup>

In his last years in California, the man who had come from Vermont to make his fortune as a lawyer in the boom town of San Francisco, found that the real gold in California did indeed lie in the gold mines themselves. The Mariposa Estate, southeast of San Francisco, was located atop the mother lode, and the mines there, the Princeton, Josephine, Pine Tree, Mount Ophir, and the Mariposa mine itself were some of the richest in the world.

The estate was owned by General John Fremont, but by 1857, Trenor Park had certain rights to the land because of a \$65,000 mortgage which he held.<sup>34</sup> Over the next few years Park purchased other mort-



*The eldest daughter of Trenor Park, Eliza, remembered waiting "anxious hours" at home for her father's safe return after his life was threatened.*



gages and judgments (court rulings) against the estate, and by 1859 his interests in the property amounted to at least \$250,000.<sup>35</sup> The following year the Vermonter worked out an arrangement with General Fremont whereby Park himself, would take over management of the estate. He was to receive one-sixteenth ownership of the property in exchange for the five-percent commission to which he was entitled as estate manager.<sup>36</sup> However, it is also important to note that as a result of the mortgages and in consequence of the managerial contract, Park, after 1860, had sole legal control of the gold-rich Las Mariposas.<sup>37</sup>

The type of mining done at Las Mariposas was quartz mining. The simple placer mining done by the individuals with pans and other devices had already depleted much of the surface gold, and it was necessary to go deeper into the ground to obtain the quartz in which additional gold was embedded.

Quartz mining was capital intensive, and under Park's management there was a great deal of development. New shafts were sunk, and steam and water-powered mills were built to extract the gold from the quartz. Railroads, roads, blacksmith's shops, offices and a company store were constructed.

Although managerial problems at the mines were manifold, labor did not appear to be the most important of Park's worries. One of his assistants wrote in 1860 from Bear Valley that the yield was good, but to save expenses the wages of the "railroad boys" had been cut. "Three quit but their places were soon filled."<sup>38</sup> In 1862, the assistant at the Green Gulch Mill wrote that he was going to move the families out of the boarding houses because the men were spending too much time with the ladies.<sup>39</sup>

What Trenor Park lacked in managerial and mining background, he tried to make up for through financial and fund-raising skills. As manager he had either to advance money himself for the new con-

struction or raise it through loans based on his own credit. In fact, much of the development at Las Mariposas during the period was financed by both East and West Coast bankers. With San Francisco banker, John Parrott, Park had a \$100,000 line of credit.<sup>40</sup> When he overstepped the limit, he secured loans through Joseph Palmer and others to make up the difference.

The lawyer and investor now turned manager was optimistic in his handling of the operation. Perhaps from the standpoint of the other owners and investors, he was too optimistic. Frederick Billings, a Vermonter also, was a major investor in the estate, and he wrote to Park in 1861: "... the mills are not running as you said they would be. You know I insist upon it that you will get ahead of facts in your calculations."<sup>41</sup>

In January of 1862 a flood inundated the Mariposa Estate. Park wrote: "A part of the dam and the flume were carried off, which can probably be repaired for

*"I hope you can sleep nights, I know it is bad for you to have to depend on Laudanum for sleep"*

15 or \$20,000; our work nearly all stopped . . . The actual damages we have sustained by the flood including stoppage of work and repairs will probably exceed \$100,000."<sup>42</sup>

But he remained optimistic as he continued in the same letter: "There has been no time since I have had the Estate when I was so well prepared for accidents of this kind as now. It makes me short of funds but will not embarrass me anything to speak of."

It is questionable, however, just exactly how optimistic he remained that summer when there was a cave-in at one of the mines and a fire at the company store. Mrs. Park wrote to her husband that August: "I hope you can sleep nights, I know it is bad for you to have to depend on Laudanum for sleep."<sup>43</sup>

It was clear by November of 1862 that the Mariposa Estate mines were in trouble. It is true that the yields in 1860 and 1861 averaged \$50,000 a month, considerably more than had been realized in previous years. However, income was just not covering expenses. Park was charged by his creditors and associates with wasteful and inefficient management. In 1862, after he had gone over his credit line once too often, John Parrott wrote to him: ". . . there was too much money spent on dead work and improvements which for the time might be dispensed with . . ."<sup>44</sup> Frederick Billings was even more critical: "Under Park's management the Estate will never get out of trouble, in fact, it only gets deeper in."<sup>45</sup>

In 1863, Trenor Park offered to give up possession of Las Mariposas if the accounts were cleared for \$1,400,000.<sup>46</sup> Undoubtedly, he would realize a good profit. In June of that year, a New York stock corporation was formed, the Mariposa Mining Company, and Park sold all of his interests in the estates to the company. The corporation was capitalized at \$10,000,000 based on the yields of 1860 and 1861.

Before his departure, the workers on the estate gave him a silver pitcher and salver of "chaste and

elegant design." In his thank-you letter, Park indicated that in spite of the criticism by his associates and in spite of the economic realities at the estate, the venture at Las Mariposas had been a success in his eyes. He wrote:

The management of the Mariposa Estate was undertaken by me with much reluctance . . . I doubted my ability to administer it . . . That under my administration the vast mineral wealth and resources have been demonstrated . . . its permanent success fully established . . . with an ascertained wealth far beyond the most sanguine expectations, is I confess a matter of self-gratulation.<sup>47</sup>

In the course of his San Francisco career, Trenor Park demonstrated that he was an individual among individualists, and yet this characterization is perhaps an oversimplification, because it overlooks an important aspect of the man's life — his family. With the exception of a period in 1858 when Laura Park remained in Vermont to bear her second daughter, Park's wife and children were with him throughout his California years. Moreover, this small family created a home in San Francisco that was warm and welcoming. Both in their first small, rented house and in their later, more luxurious home on Tehama Street, Laura and Trenor Park established an ever-changing household that consisted of relatives and close friends from the East Coast.

In her memoir, Eliza Park describes the extended family with which they were surrounded in San Francisco. Besides Charlie Lincoln and Mrs. Park's brother's widow and new husband, the household came to include: "Calvin Park, a cousin of my Father's . . . I used to cuddle up beside him and he would spin long yarns of travel that would go on from day to day. Then came my Aunt Anna and Uncle Austin, a boy some nineteen years of age, the youngest of the Park family."<sup>48</sup> Oscar Lovell Shafter and his wife also lived with the Parks for a time.

At first this household must have served as a place



*Eliza Park (left) and Ella Nichols. Trenor Park later married Ella following the death of his wife in 1875.*



## Trenor Park

of retreat for newcomers in a new land. For after all, no matter how successful Park was, he and his relatives were immigrants. Their first years in the West must have been somewhat difficult and frightening. Laura Park wrote in 1855 to Charlie Lincoln: "Tonight Mr. Shafter, Train and I after dinner went into the kitchen to have a smoke — they use pipes lately . . . we talked of the hard times after we first arrived here, do you remember how we used to go into the pantry on Virginia Street and eat bread and molasses? Funny times weren't they?"<sup>49</sup>

Throughout his years in the West, Trenor Park must have looked to his California home as a place which preserved familiar aspects of his Vermont home — a refuge which stood apart from the fast-paced San Francisco society.

Descriptions of life at the Park house suggest that the atmosphere was informal, homey and jovial. Oscar Shafter wrote of a "capital" dinner at Mr. Park's; "Not a boiled dinner but the next to it in rank . . . not of the showy and ambitious type, but plain, substantial and homebred."<sup>50</sup> It is easy to imagine the conversation around the dinner table: news from home would be exchanged, stories told and jokes retold of the kind that only another Vermonter might understand. After the meal there would be singing 'round the piano, and the melodies would include those sung "in the dear land from which we came."

Indeed, the presence of so many friends and relatives from Vermont must have served to strengthen the ties which the family had with the East Coast. Economically, Trenor Park kept up the bonds with his New England homeland. In 1856 after being in California for only four years, his account book showed that he had already sent \$3,000 home.<sup>51</sup> In 1862 he was still sending weekly checks to his father.<sup>52</sup>

After the sale of Las Mariposas, Park and his family came back to the East. Trenor Park was a changed

man. From a small town lawyer, he had grown to be an important investor with aspirations that were national and international in scope. Many of his ventures in California, particularly the Mariposa investment, had been financed in the New York monetary market. In California he had made important East Coast connections, including Benjamin Wood, Alvin Adams and Adams' associate, William Dinsmore.

Thereafter, his Vermont home notwithstanding, the energetic investor and capitalist spent a great deal of the next eighteen years in New York City and far afield investing in gold and silver mines and other speculative ventures. Immediately after returning from the West Coast, he became involved in the formation of the Empire Gold & Silver Mining Company. By July of 1864 he was the largest investor in this company.<sup>53</sup>

In later years Park held a controlling interest in the Emma Mine in Utah (1871-1872). He invested in the Pacific Mail Steamship Line, for which he served as director (1875-1882). He bought a controlling interest in the Panama Railroad and served as president of this organization also (1875-1882). In 1881, the year before his death, he sold his shares in the Panama Railroad to the De Lesseps Panama Canal Company for \$7,000,000.<sup>54</sup>

Laura Park died in 1875. Seven years later, six months before his own death, Trenor Park married Ella C. Nichols. Ella was not a stranger to the Park family. The Nichols were Vermonters also, and they, like the Parks, had gone to California during the gold rush. The two families had become close friends, and Ella became a favorite friend of Eliza Parks. In fact, Ella became almost one of the family, and when the Parks returned to Vermont in 1864, Ella came with them. Ella later accompanied Eliza as a companion to Miss Ferry's Finishing School in New Haven, Connecticut. Early Park family photographs include young Ella Nichols, as do the house-

hold account books.

In 1872, Eliza Park (then Mrs. John G. McCullough) wrote to her mother in reference to Ella Nichols who seemed to eschew any beaux; ". . . there doesn't seem to be a soul. I don't think the girl will ever marry."<sup>55</sup> It was three years later that Mrs. Park died and Ella went back to Vermont to assist the Park household and eventually to marry Trenor Park. Perhaps Ella's own mother best expressed the irony of the situation: ". . . I used to say when she came home (as a little girl) 'Ella Park, have you concluded to make a little visit?' little thinking she would in truth bear that name."<sup>56</sup>

Ella Nichols Park returned to California shortly after Trenor Park's death and purchased the land in San Rafael on which she eventually built *Falkirk*. It is a curious coincidence that this house and Trenor Park's home in Vermont have both survived into the present and both have become the focus for local preservation efforts. Their monumental structures are a lasting testimonial to the energy and optimism of those vigorous times.

Trenor Park died in September, 1882, aboard the *San Blas* en route to Panama. It is indeed a twist of fate that he died while following the same route which he had traveled thirty years earlier on his way to the western city which changed the course of his life.

All of the photographs are courtesy of The Park-McCullough House, North Bennington, Vermont.

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## Trenor Park

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# Irish Republicanism

## California's Reaction to

During one evening in late May 1919, a tall, slender man, with a rigid, bespectacled face, stowed away aboard the ship "Ventura" off the coast of Ireland. On June 11 he reached his destination, New York City, and disembarked from the ship, unnoticed and without fanfare. Only a month after his arrival, he paraded down Market Street in San Francisco, lined with thousands of cheering spectators, waving the tri-color flag of the Irish Republic. Some of the spectators, however, jeered him and called him a traitor and a troublemaker. He experienced the same kind of response when he paid California another visit in November, stopping in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. This conspicuous and unidentified traveler was Eamon De Valera, the president of the Irish Republic. His presence in California brought forth both the amity and hostility of the state's inhabitants and engendered a conflict between love for America and love for Irish freedom.

Before he set upon his journey to America, De Valera had participated in the Irish independence movement during World War I. He commanded a battalion of Irish Volunteers during the Easter Uprising in April 1916. With a force of 800, Patrick Pearse led the uprising against the British rule in Ireland. The revolt began when Pearse read the proclamation of the Irish Republic on the front steps of the Dublin post office. Centered in Dublin, the revolt only lasted a week. By that time, the British troops had overwhelmed the opposition and executed sixteen of the revolt's leaders. De Valera escaped execution because of his American citizenship (he was born in the United States) and, consequently, remained imprisoned.<sup>1</sup>

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# vs. "Pure Americanism"

## Eamon De Valera's Visits



In July 1917 David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, released De Valera and the other participants in the uprising as an act of reconciliation. De Valera then returned to Ireland and took over the leadership of the Irish independence movement, established around the country-wide Sinn Fein party. After the Sinn Fein election victory of 1918 in which seventy-three of its candidates were victorious, the party representatives decided not to take their proper places at the parliament in London. Instead they proclaimed and established an Irish Republic. They set up a constituent assembly called the Dail Eireann. As the governing body of the Irish Republic, the Dail Eireann elected Eamon De Valera as president. The British considered these actions treasonable policies against the crown. Thus the two and a half year conflict, better known as the Anglo-Irish war, began.

De Valera had failed to take an active role in these events leading up to the Anglo-Irish war. The English government had arrested him in October 1918 on suspicion of conspiring with the Germans. However, in February 1919, he managed to escape from the Lincoln jail in England and returned safely to Ireland. There he remained in hiding for four months as a fugitive from British justice and as president of a de facto government, trying to lead his country in war. De Valera finally became frustrated and disenchanted with his weak and ineffective position in hiding. He, therefore, decided to journey to the United States where he thought he could attain his two major objectives that would bring the conflict in Ireland to an end, the de jure recognition of the Irish Republic by the United States and the financial support to run his new republic through the organizing of an External Bond-loan.<sup>2</sup>

De Valera arrived in New York City on June 11. He was confident about his decision to come to the United States for the attainment of his goals. With the Great War at an end, the United States held a

*At a ceremony in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park on July 20, 1919, Eamon De Valera dedicated and unveiled a statue of Robert Emmet.*





*The St. Francis Hotel served as De Valera's temporary abode during his July 1919 stay in San Francisco. For a brief period the tri-color flag of the Irish Republic flew from the flagpole on top of the hotel.*

new, powerful position among the governments of the world. President Woodrow Wilson dominated the discussions at the Paris Peace conference with his League of Nations scheme. Surely U.S. recognition of the Irish Republic would have a favorable influence on the decisions of the other governments. Also Wilson's war aims, his famous Fourteen Points, included the self-determination for small nations. De Valera classified his cause of Irish freedom with this U.S. war aim of self-determination. Finally De Valera had a huge Irish-American community of four million to rely upon for both his recognition and financial bond campaigns. Besides the numbers, the Irish-Americans were well organized into two major national organizations, the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF) and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH).

At first not certain as to exactly how the U.S. government would react to his unexpected visit (the U.S. was allied with England), De Valera assumed a low profile for the first twelve days of his visit. He then realized that the U.S. government would not

extradite him. The United States took this position primarily because De Valera was an American citizen and because the English government thought that the U.S. government should refrain from arresting him. By arresting him, the U.S. government would make De Valera a martyr, thereby strengthening his cause in the eyes of the world. As a result of this U.S. policy of restraint, De Valera made his first public appearance on June 23 in New York City. A week later he began his tour of the country to espouse his cause of U.S. recognition.<sup>3</sup>

De Valera included California on his first tour. The national AOH, during the twelve day interim period, had sent De Valera an invitation to attend and address its national convention. The convention was to be held between July 14-19 in San Francisco and attended by 1700 delegates. De Valera accepted this invitation enthusiastically. He discerned the convention as an excellent opportunity to voice his cause to a national forum.<sup>4</sup>

As De Valera campaigned his way across the coun-



try and drew closer to California, the Irish-American community prepared for his arrival. Father Peter Yorke, a Jesuit priest of San Francisco, who came from Ireland in the 1890s, was the leader of the Irish-American community. He edited the state's main Irish-American newspaper, *The Leader*, which he founded in 1903. He also headed the state's largest Irish-American organization, the Friends of Irish Freedom, which had a membership of approximately 50,000 and which he helped to establish during the days of the Easter Uprising in 1916. The Ancient Order of Hibernians, with a membership of 20,000, and the United Irish Societies of San Francisco (UIS of S.F.), representing over sixty Irish-American groups, assisted Father Yorke and the FOIF in organizing and leading the state's Irish-American community.<sup>5</sup>

On July 12, *The Leader* announced that in five days De Valera would be in San Francisco. The FOIF, AOH, and UIS of S.F. began to work meticulously and indefatigably to complete all the necessary preparations. They set up numerous committees and planned an entire agenda for De Valera's first visit to California. Andrew J. Gallagher, a San Francisco labor leader and Supervisor and Father Yorke's second lieutenant, headed and directed these preparation activities, and once De Valera arrived, he remained at his side, making sure everything went smoothly. Gallagher also acquired from Chief of Police Thomas White two body guards, detectives Dave Murphy and Martin Gallagher.<sup>6</sup>

After stops in such cities as Chicago, Omaha, Ogden, and Reno, De Valera arrived in San Francisco on July 18. "San Francisco Welcomes De Valera," read the headline of *The Leader*, placing directly below it a picture of the city's illustrious visitor. Mayor James Rolph, Jr., the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, as well as the 1700 delegates of the AOH convention officially greeted him. De Val-

era paraded down Market Street, filled to capacity on both sides with cheering onlookers. His car was pulled down the street by AOH delegates grasping ropes attached to it. The procession ended at De Valera's temporary abode, the St. Francis Hotel.<sup>7</sup>

During his three day visit, De Valera made at least a dozen speeches daily, received numerous awards and honorary degrees, and dedicated the Robert Emmet statue in Golden Gate Park. He attended the AOH convention at the Exposition Auditorium on July 19. The delegates had decided to use the phrase "Self-Determination for Ireland" as the convention's slogan. De Valera presented a long and forceful speech, defending the case for U.S. recognition of the Irish Republic. Father Augustine, the confessor of the executed Irishmen in the 1916 uprising, also spoke that evening. The delegates adjourned the convention by passing a resolution that asked for U.S. recognition of the Irish Republic, a cause they termed as one of Humanity's.<sup>8</sup>

De Valera, however, delivered his main address the day before, on July 18, at the Civic Auditorium to an enthusiastic crowd of 12,000. Throughout most of his speech, he stressed the importance of U.S. recognition. Recognition did not represent a victory for only Ireland but also one for the United States. President Wilson would achieve one of his war aims — to establish a lasting world peace — by granting recognition of the Irish Republic. The League of Nations would then be the organized moral force of the world. But for all this to take place, the League's searchlight of conscience must include the British Empire and the granting of Irish Independence. De Valera concluded by calling himself the president of the Irish Republic and stressing that its survival depended upon American public opinion and the U.S. government. By their approval, the Irish Republic would be given "de jure" status by the whole world.<sup>9</sup>

De Valera's first sojourn to California greatly im-

pressed the Irish-Americans. Father Yorke praised him in his paper's editorials, emphasizing that De Valera made a great sacrifice to undertake the 3000 mile long journey to San Francisco. It surely showed his appreciation for California's work for the Irish cause over the years. "He came, saw, and conquered the hearts and minds of San Franciscans," quoted the *San Francisco Monitor*, the major Catholic newspaper of northern California. In its editorial, the paper compared De Valera to St. Paul, a man who fought and suffered for justice's sake.<sup>10</sup>

De Valera also seemed to greatly galvanize the Irish-republican nationalism in California. By his presence and his speeches, he appeared to develop in Irish-Americans a visceral feeling of the immediacy and urgency of their cause. No longer did they feel like rational observers. "This is a critical time in the history of our race and calls for a lively interest on the part of every Hibernian," wrote P. T. Horan, treasurer of the AOH Division No. 1 in Los Angeles. He called his order's convention in San Francisco the greatest in its history. He also described how De Valera's address was received "with unabounded enthusiasm" and reported that De Valera's speech would be read at all the branches of the order in the Los Angeles area.<sup>11</sup> In sum, De Valera's visit was a great success except for "a few jaundiced individuals," according to the state's Irish-Americans.<sup>12</sup>

The Irish-Americans were referring to the Americans in San Francisco and elsewhere who did not look upon De Valera's visitation with great joy and expressed their discontent in many different ways. Henry A. Woodward of Hawaii wrote and addressed a letter to California Senator James Phelan, which the *Sacramento Bee* published in its editorial section. In the letter, Woodward stated that the United States had no right to interfere with the domestic affairs of another nation. During his visit, De Valera and his sympathizers only intended to stir up trouble with

"May God bless California and  
may God save Ireland!"

EAMON DE VALERA

America's loyal ally England. Woodward then asked some rhetorical questions. Would the United States allow Hawaii to ask for separation from the United States to join Japan, and further, then would the United States consider England friendly if it encouraged Hawaii to take such action? Was Lincoln wrong when he coerced the South to remain in the Union?<sup>13</sup>

Anonymous objectors also publicly brought charges against De Valera's visit in letters to the editors of their local newspapers. These anonymous objectors said that by his tour, De Valera was only trying to create hostility between the United States and England. According to them, Mayor James Rolph, Jr. and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors had no right to greet De Valera and endorse his cause. By doing this, these government officials used tax-payers' money and time not in the public's interest and without the consent of their constituency; moreover, such actions mixed domestic politics with foreign affairs.<sup>14</sup> Another expression of protest centered around the flying of the tri-color flag of the Irish Republic in San Francisco. Thomas Keating, manager of the St. Francis Hotel, removed the tri-color flag from the flag pole on top of his building. He did this because of the advice of a (quote) "government official," who said that the flag should not fly until the U.S. government officially recognized the Irish Republic.<sup>15</sup>

Despite these slight rumblings of protest, De Val-



*The leader of San Francisco's Irish community during the time of De Valera's visit was Father Peter Yorke, a Jesuit priest.*

protecting people against fraudulent financial schemes — he decided to sell bond-certificates and not actual bonds. However, once the Irish Republic was recognized and the British were out of Ireland, the bond-certificates could be exchanged for gold bonds of the Irish Republic with five percent interest. De Valera next had to close the Irish Victory Fund, a funding drive started at the end of the Great War by the national FOIF to help finance Ireland's attempt to have her case presented at the Paris Peace Conference. De Valera effectively terminated the fund by August 1919.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of these amendments, De Valera began to tour the country again in October, but this time to prepare and organize each state for the launching of the bond-certificate drive in January. De Valera repeatedly elaborated on how the bond-monies would be spent to establish consular services to promote commerce and to develop Irish land and industries. By November 15, De Valera had reached Portland, Oregon. Expecting De Valera to arrive in San Francisco on November 17 for his two day stay, the FOIF, AOH, and UIS of S.F. worked together again under the leadership of Andrew J. Gallagher to take care of the necessary preparations. As before, when De Valera arrived, a huge crowd, which included mayor Rolph and the S.F. Board of Supervisors, greeted him. After the parade up Market Street, a group of De Valera's followers carried him into the Hotel Palace atop their shoulders.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike his previous visit, however, De Valera did not make many public appearances. Instead he occupied a large portion of his time with the setting up of the bond-certificate drive organization. He met several prospective bankers interested in handling the bond drive in California at several meetings arranged by the leadership of the FOIF. During these meetings, De Valera also instructed Father Yorke and others on how to establish a state branch of the AC

era spoke these words in his farewell message on July 20: "I thank the people of California from the bottom of my heart . . . May God bless California and may God save Ireland!"<sup>16</sup> Overall he thought his first trip to California had "won countless friends for Ireland." De Valera was anxious to return to the east coast to clear up the last minute difficulties surrounding his 10 million dollar bond-loan drive. He intended to launch the drive in California as well as in the rest of the country on January 1, 1920. He had already appointed the American Commission on Irish Independence (AC on II) as sponsors of the drive and James O'Mara, a very adept Limerick businessman, as the drive's director.<sup>17</sup>

De Valera successfully overcame the drive's obstacles during his two month stay on the east coast. In order to circumvent the blue-sky laws — legislation





An Irish tea vendor in San Francisco, c. 1915 displays his anti-British sentiment. Note the "Recognize The Irish Republic" sign above the doorway. California's largest Irish-American organization, the Friends of Irish Freedom, had a membership of approximately 50,000 when De Valera arrived.

on II. He eventually selected the San Francisco Hibernian Savings, headed by E. J. and R. M. Tobin, to act as the treasurer of the drive. Father Yorke summed up this visit of De Valera's in his editorial, "His first visit was one of friendship but this one is one of business." He observed that De Valera was more serious-minded, like a professor expounding mathematical principles. De Valera's changed demeanor could probably also be attributed to the more widespread and intense opposition he faced during this, his second visit.<sup>20</sup>

A week before his arrival, De Valera, himself, was a hotly discussed issue among San Franciscans. Headed by Louis T. Grant, the American Legion Post of the San Francisco county, with a membership of 10,000, led the opposition. The Legion focused its protest on the flying of the tri-color flag during De Valera's upcoming visit. The "Legion Frowns on the Display of the Sinn Fein Flag," read the headline of the *San Francisco Examiner*. In the article, Grant stated that the American Legion did not oppose Irish freedom but greatly disapproved of the displaying of an unrecognized flag "on parity with our own" in the United States. They were not anti-Irish but one hundred percent American.<sup>21</sup>

The organization of American Free Press joined the American Legion in its protest of the displaying of the tri-color flag. The American Free Press expressed an isolationist tone in its protest. The spokesman for the group, J. Arthur Patterson, interpreted De Valera's visit as "A cold-blooded attempt to involve the city and nation with other countries." Such actions taken by foreign elements within the United States "threatened the pure spirit of Americanism."<sup>22</sup>

Irish-Americans were incensed by these bitter public protests. Judge Bernard Flood and Supervisor Andrew J. Gallagher responded to their opposition in the columns of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. They

noted that the voices of protest did not represent the entire membership of their organizations but only a minority. Already throughout the United States, the tri-color flag had flown without protest. Flood and Gallagher ended by emphatically stating that if any protestors interfered with the displaying of the flag, without the authorization of the U.S. government, they would be met by a "drastic opposition."<sup>23</sup>

As it turned out, the flag of the Irish Republic flew. In fact, during the greeting parade upon De Valera's arrival, two veterans of the First World War and members of the American Legion carried the stars and stripes beside the tri-color.<sup>24</sup> The protestors did not accept this stoically, however. The U.S. Attorney of San Francisco received several phone calls from people denouncing the flying of the flag. The San Francisco Business Council, headed by J. B. Rawlings, also sent a telegram to President Wilson:

We believe that to suppress this (flying of the tri-color) would save bloodshed. We further feel that any citizen who feels that the American flag is not good enough to march under should be immediately deported.<sup>25</sup>

During his tumultuous visit, De Valera collapsed from fatigue. Although his doctors recommended a few days rest, he refused to follow their advice and boarded the train for Los Angeles.<sup>26</sup> De Valera enjoyed a pleasant respite with his unplanned train stop at the San Jose depot. A crowd of one hundred faithful followers welcomed De Valera. Barney J. Higgins, director of the reception committee, spoke graciously of De Valera in his introductory remarks, saying that San Jose approved of his work and assured him of their continued support. After being presented with a bouquet of flowers, De Valera thanked them for this unexpected reception; it gave him great encouragement about the success of his cause.<sup>27</sup>

De Valera departed San Jose not fully realizing that

his stop there was only a calm before the storm. As early as November 13, P. T. Horan wrote about the tentative schedule of De Valera's sojourn in Los Angeles and about the trouble that might break out because of "English Propaganda" that was trying to make his visit a "frost." Horan concluded that the trouble signified another attempt by the forces of British imperialism to prevent Southern California from hearing De Valera's truth concerning Ireland.<sup>28</sup> The *San Francisco Monitor* also commented immediately after De Valera's departure in the same kind of apprehensiveness as Horan. The paper warned the protestors in Los Angeles that they would be responsible for any disorder or activation of the "hoodlum elements" during De Valera's visit to Los Angeles. According to the *S.F. Monitor*, the protestors only wanted to foment social and religious bigotry.<sup>29</sup>

These accusations of foreboding ill-will about De Valera's visit to Los Angeles accurately depicted the tense atmosphere pervading the city during the week before his arrival. Open protests began as early as November 14. "Why is De Valera Coming Here!" ran the headline of the *Los Angeles Times*, which was followed by an article answering the question. De Valera, a fugitive from British justice, was coming to Los Angeles to cause trouble between the United States and England, one of the country's honorable allies. De Valera could be considered a traitor. During World War I, he sided with the enemy, Germany, and as Admiral William Sims has shown, De Valera was responsible for the war deaths of several U.S. sailors. To support De Valera and his cause and to welcome him courteously upon his arrival would be "an insult to the men who were in the service of the United States and . . . the cause for which they



*San Francisco's Hibernian Savings acted as the treasurer of De Valera's California bond-certificate drive organization.*



### "A Square Deal For Ireland"

The *Los Angeles Evening Herald*

fought and died." The article concluded by listing the prominent personages and organizations of the area who criticized and refused to welcome De Valera. The Los Angeles Mayor Meredith P. Snyder, Attorney Oscar Lawlor, and Rt. Rev. Joseph H. Johnson decided not to partake in any of the activities surrounding the De Valera visit. The American Legion of Los Angeles and Pasadena, the Baptist Ministerial Conference of Los Angeles, and the Associated British Societies of Los Angeles also refused to greet the Irish visitor.<sup>30</sup>

Depending upon one's perspective, the *Los Angeles Times* held the prestigious or notorious position as the leader of De Valera's opposition. The *Times* had a strong tradition of a patriotic and anti-labor (Irish) stand, beginning with the paper's founder, Harrison Otis, a veteran of the Civil and Spanish-American wars. Living up to its conservative and nationalistic tradition, the *Times* was primarily responsible for creating the precarious and tense mood during the days prior to De Valera's visit. The most notable example concerned De Valera's confrontation with the American Legion in Portland prior to his stay in San Francisco.<sup>31</sup>

The American Legion post of Portland refused to allow the followers of De Valera to display the tri-color flag. Twice members of the organization tore off the flag from De Valera's automobile. The most volatile encounter during De Valera's ordeal in Portland occurred one morning as he exited the Portland

Hotel and prepared to enter his car for a tour of the city. The American Legion Headquarters resided on the same street as the Hotel, and that morning, several Legion members waited patiently outside for De Valera's exit. Seeing the tri-color flag attached to the automobile along side the American flag, the Legion members confronted De Valera as he approached the car and insisted that he remove the tri-color flag. An argument ensued, but De Valera reluctantly agreed to their unfair demand. During the sparring of words, the rage increased to such an extent that before De Valera could act on his concession, one of the Legion members violently tore off the flag.<sup>32</sup>

A crowd of some size had gathered while all of this was taking place. Dr. A. C. Smith, chairman of De Valera's reception committee, had also come out into the street. Now about thirty Legion members stood within the crowd, "howling down" Dr. Smith's attempt to speak to the crowd. Eventually De Valera and Dr. Smith gave up and returned to the hotel, after which the crowd dispersed.<sup>33</sup>

"Legion's Veterans Tear the Irish Flag From De Valera's Car" and "Only One Flag: The Motto Of Every True American," headlined the *Los Angeles Times*. In fact, the paper repeatedly reported on the trouble in Portland until De Valera arrived.<sup>34</sup> While being bombarded by these reports daily the Irish-Americans had a difficult and delicate task of arranging for De Valera's first visit to Los Angeles. They attributed the protests to English agents. The Los Angeles attorney Joseph Scott, the most respected Irish-American leader next to Father Yorke and the head of the Southern California branches of the FOIF, was the chairman of De Valera's reception committee. He expressed his anxiety about his difficult assignment: "We took no chance that De Valera might be picked up, whisked across the border, and returned to England for Hanging." Scott and his fellow Irish-Americans thought the British



Attorney Joseph Scott, a respected Irish-American leader, was the head of De Valera's Los Angeles reception committee.

had put "a price on De Valera's head."<sup>35</sup>

As a result of these suspicions, Scott carefully scheduled De Valera's activities during his stay in Los Angeles. On November 19, the day before De Valera's arrival, Scott and the FOIF had everything ready. They must have been also happy with the more sympathetic attitude of the *Los Angeles Evening Herald*. The paper published an advertisement of the FOIF that asked for "A Square Deal For Ireland." Centered with a picture of De Valera, the advertisement stated that Ireland was a nation in its own right and according to Wilson's principle of self-determination.<sup>36</sup>

Apprehension, the fear produced by not really knowing the outcome of an event, permeated all the groups and citizens of Los Angeles the day before De Valera's arrival. The next morning De Valera entered the city and stepped out of the train to be met by a large gathering of his faithful followers. The *Los Angeles Times* failed to place any restraints on its attacks. The paper called De Valera a fugitive president of a mystical republic. It stretched its statements to such a point that De Valera ended up being a "Red," a communist in disguise who should be de-

ported. De Valera was an Irish "Benedict Arnold." The last sentence of a particular editorial read: "The atmosphere is polluted by his presence."<sup>37</sup>

Despite the assault of words, all went well during De Valera's first day in Los Angeles, that is at least until the evening. That night, De Valera, Joseph Scott, and members of the FOIF went to the Shrine Auditorium for De Valera's oration. But to their shock and dismay, the doors were locked tight. John Byrne, Jr., the son of John Byrne, an officer of the FOIF of Los Angeles, vividly remembered standing in front of the locked doors. John, Jr. recalled very well how his father discussed this meeting, calling it the biggest event in the history of the Los Angeles Irish-American community.<sup>38</sup>

On the night of the meeting, John Jr. had left early with his father. As the two approached the Shrine Auditorium, they encountered a huge, uproarious crowd encircling the entrance on Jefferson Street. Entering the mass of people, they deduced from the yells the reasons for the cries of anger — the doors were shut tight, which surprised John Jr. and his father as well as everyone else there that evening. Joseph Scott then made his way to the front of the group, screaming for silence and order. The crowd at first ignored Scott's pleas for order: "It almost ended in a riot. They wanted to destroy the place." Nevertheless Scott finally gained control of the frenzied crowd, told them that the meeting had been changed to next week at the Washington Ball Park, and demanded that they disperse peacefully, which they did.<sup>39</sup>

The origins of this near riot began several weeks before. At that time, the FOIF sent a check for \$250 to the Shriners to rent the auditorium on November 20. The Shriners accepted the check and confirmed the date for the use of the hall. When the *Los Angeles Times* and other organizations started publicly expressing their disapproval of De Valera's visit,

George Fitch, the chairman of the board of the organization, decided to cancel the commitment to the FOIF and not rent them the hall. His defense for taking such action resembled the reasons why the *Times* did not want De Valera in Los Angeles. Fitch sent the letter of refusal to the FOIF a week before De Valera's arrival. Fitch explained that De Valera did not represent the majority of the Irish people and that the purpose of the meeting was not in agreement with the principles of pure Americanism. Scott, being an attorney, probably realized his organization's right to the use of the hall; so he refused to agree to their request. The next event to occur was the evening of the meeting in which the Shriners locked out the Irish-Americans.<sup>40</sup>

Since the Washington Ball Park meeting would not take place until November 24, Scott changed De Valera's itinerary. He took De Valera to San Diego during the brief interim. Although hoping for a more favorable welcome from the citizens of San Diego, Scott did not really know what to expect. His arrival in San Diego cleared up all of his doubts and hopes. San Diego gave De Valera an unfriendly greeting. Mayor Louis Wilde and the citizens of San Diego refused to welcome De Valera because he represented a threat to their principles of Americanism.<sup>41</sup>

The next week the De Valera group gathered at the Washington Ball Park. Despite all the verbal abuse and threats, the supporters of De Valera were not intimidated. They showed their determination and pride in their cause by showing up for De Valera's speech 10,000 strong. The speeches that evening expressed a new fighting spirit. Joseph Scott spoke first. Each sentence was filled with emotion and reflected the righteousness of his cause. Scott also frequently interjected attacks against the *Los Angeles Times*, calling its writers "journalistic anarchists!" Probably realizing that Scott said everything he could have, but only better, De Valera emphasized in his

speech the right of the Irish people to their own independent republic and avoided attacking his enemies. He concluded that recognition could only be obtained by the support of the United States — "the supreme moral court of the World."<sup>42</sup>

De Valera departed California after his speech at the Washington Ball Park. Overall his trip to California on this occasion was not fruitless despite his opponents. In both Los Angeles and San Francisco, he laid solid foundations for the upcoming bond-certificate drive, which would be very successful, with the Irish-Americans exceeding the state quota of one million dollars.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the extreme Americanism contained in the attacks of De Valera's opponents coalesced the Irish-Americans of California into a more cohesive unit, centered firmly around the cause of Irish freedom as never before in their history. Now the battleground was not across the Atlantic but in their own respective state. Recognition of the Irish Republic became the focal point of their activities. The battle for recognition also became the battle for a revengeful victory against the opposition that disgraced both their leader and cause. Horan revealed this new, firm conviction in one of his letters to John Byrne:

The closing of the Shrine doors was an humiliation. California was the only place on the continent that it happened to him. It was a disgrace and if the 13,000 in the crowd had been organized, it would not have happened. What are we going to do? It is simple, It is to organize, Organize! Organize!! If not, we will be the butt of every . . . pro-British society.<sup>44</sup>

Photographs appearing on pages 172-173, 177 and 180 are courtesy of the author. All others are from the CHS Library.



## Notes

1. For a biography of De Valera see Earl of Longford and Thomas O'Neill, *Eamon De Valera* (London, Hutchinson and Co., 1970); Also, for an excellent account of Irish history during this period see Robert Kee, *The Green Flag* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1972).
2. Eamon De Valera, *Ireland's Claim to the Government of the United States for Recognition* (Healy Collection: Hoover Institute at Stanford University, 1920).
3. There are many accounts of De Valera's tour of the U.S. However, while most emphasized his tour in the eastern part of the country, few mentioned his California visits: Sean Cronin, *The McGarrity Papers* (Ireland: Anvil Books, 1972), pp. 73-92; Katherine O'Doherty, *Assignment America: De Valera's Mission in the United States* (New York: De Tanko Publishers, 1957); Patrick MacCartan, *With De Valera in America* (New York: Brentano, 1932); Francis M. Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question 1910-1923* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978) pp. 149-162.
4. *The Leader*, (Microfilm: UC Berkeley), July 12, 1919, p. 2; *San Francisco Monitor*, (Microfilm: SJSU), July 12, 1919, p. 1.
5. These are the two good biographies of Father Peter Yorke: James Walsh, *Ethnic Militancy: An Irish Catholic Prototype* (San Francisco: R&E Research Associates, Reprint 1972); Joseph Bruscher, *Consecrated Thunderbolt* (New Jersey: Joseph Wagner Publishers, 1973); *The Leader*, July 12, 1919, pp. 1-2 provided membership of Irish-American organizations.
6. *San Francisco Monitor*, July 12, 1919, p. 1. Headline of the paper read "S.F. Awaits President De Valera's visit," *The Leader*, July 28, 1919, p. 4: its editorial called him "The Greatest Irishman of Modern Times."
7. *The Leader*, July 19, 1919, p. 1; July 26, 1919, p. 1.
8. *Ibid.*, July 26, 1919, pp. 1, 4; Detailed account of De Valera's visit see James Walsh, "De Valera in the United States, 1919" *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* (September to December 1926) 72: 92-105.
9. *The Leader*, July 26, 1919, pp. 1, 4.
10. *Ibid.*, July 19, 1919, p. 4; *S.F. Monitor*, July 26, 1919, p. 1 and July 12, 1919, p. 4.
11. P. T. Horan, Letter to John Byrne, July 1919 (John Byrne Collection: SJSU Archives): Box 1: Doc. No. A14.
12. *S.F. Monitor*, July 26, 1919, p. 4.
13. *Sacramento Bee*, (Microfilm: SJSU), July 16, 1919 p. 3; Phelan replied that Hawaii and Ireland were not the same. Hawaii was not oppressed like Ireland. Lincoln eradicated slavery which was precisely what the Irish were trying to do in Ireland. He ended: "No man is a true American who does not sympathize with the struggles of the weaker nations for justice and liberty."
14. *San Jose Mercury*, (Microfilm: SJSU), July 15, p. 1; July 18, 1919, p. 1; July 19, 1919, p. 6, Editorial "De Valera's Mission."
15. *Ibid.*, July 18, 1919, pp. 1, 3; The AOH sought unsuccessfully to find out who the unidentified government official was, despite Senator Phelan's assistance.
16. *The Leader*, July 26, 1919, p. 1.
17. O'Doherty, *Assignment in America*, gave the best account of the bond drive's intricacies. Also see Dorothy Marcadale, *The Irish Republic: A Documented Chronicle* (New York: Frair, Straus, and Grioux, 1965, pp. 309-315).
18. O'Doherty, *Assignment in America*, pp. 44-64.
19. *The Leader*, November 1, 1919, p. 1; November 15, 1919, p. 1; November 22, 1919, p. 1.
20. *Ibid.*, November 8, 1919, p. 4; November 22, 1919, p. 4; *San Jose Mercury*, November 19, 1919, pp. 1-2.
21. *San Francisco Chronicle*, (Microfilm: SJSU), November 17, 1919, pp. 1-2; Louis Grant, Letter to the Bank of Italy November 18, 1919 (San Francisco: Archives of the American Legion). Grant and his county post of the Legion probably acted without the approval of the California American Legion's state department. For at the American Legion's state convention in San Francisco, October 8-10, the delegates never discussed or passed a resolution concerning De Valera's visit in the U.S.: see American Legion of California, *Verbatim Proceedings of the 1st Annual State Convention in San Francisco 1919* (San Francisco: Archives of the American Legion). The Legion was just recently established: American Legion Post of San Francisco, *Two page Leaflet, 1919*, (San Francisco: Archives of the American Legion) Fred Smith, *The History of California's American Legion* (S.F.: Archives of American Legion, 1928); Raymond Moley, *The American Legion Story* (New York: Meredith Co., 1966).
22. *S.F. Chronicle*, November 17, 1919, pp. 1-2; Patterson was also a member of the American Legion.
23. *Ibid.*, November 17, 1919, pp. 1-2; *The Leader*, November 22, 1919 p. 1.
24. *The Leader*, November 22, 1919, p. 1; *S.F. Chronicle*, November 18, 1919, p. 3; *San Jose Mercury*, November 18, 1919, p. 1.
25. *S.F. Chronicle*, November 18, 1919, p. 3.
26. *Ibid.*, November 19, 1919, p. 3.
27. *San Jose Mercury*, November 19, 1919, p. 1.
28. P. T. Horan, Letter to John Byrne, November 18, 1919, John Byrne Collection, SJSU Archives: Box 1: Doc. No. A19.
29. *S.F. Monitor*, November 22, 1919, p. 7.
30. *Los Angeles Times*, (Microfilm: UCLA), November 14, 1919, p. 1; November 15, 1919, p. 1; November 16, 1919, p. 1.
31. William Bonelli, *Billion Dollar Blackjack: History of the L.A. Times* (Beverly Hills: Civic Research Press, 1954), pp. 1-23.

# Irish Republicanism

(Text presents a very biased and hostile account of the paper's history. Use carefully).

32. *L.A. Times*, November 15, 1919, pp. 1, 3; November 16, 1919, p. 1.
33. *Ibid.*, However, the American Legion members seemed to be acting on their own. The National American Legion officials denounced this incident in Portland and called it "an unauthorized act by individuals." The editorial of the Legion's national weekly was entitled, "A Mob is not the Legion." It claimed to have had nothing to do with the tearing down of the flag. *American Legion Weekly*, December, 26, 1919, (San Francisco: Archives of the American Legion), p. 12.
34. *L.A. Times*, November 15, 1919, pp. 1, 3; November 19, 1919, p. 1; November 20, 1919 p. 1; De Valera said in his luncheon speech at the Hotel Alexandria that the incident in Portland was trivial and that it was instigated by only a few Legion members.
35. Joseph Scott, "Joe Scott Story: As told to Edward Prendergast" *Los Angeles Evening Herald* April 28-June 4, 1952 (Microfilm: Bancroft Library at Berkeley).
36. P. T. Horan, Letter to John Byrne, November 13, 1919 Box 1: Doc. No. A19; Newspaper clipping of the *L.A. Evening Herald*, November 1919, Box 1: A20-A21a.
37. *L.A. Times*, November 21, 1921, p. 4; November 23, 1919, p. 1.
38. John Byrne, Jr., Interview, April 1979 (San Jose: personal possession).
39. *Ibid.*,; Also Scott, *Story to Prendergast*; Mary Kelly, Letter September 10, 1979 (San Jose: personal possession).
40. *L.A. Times*, November 19, 1919, p. 1; November 20, 1919, p. 1.
41. *Ibid.*, November 23, 1919, p. 5. Also President Edward Kelly of the American Legion of San Diego was forced to resign because he was a member of the FOIF reception committee for De Valera's visit.
42. *L.A. Times*, November 24, 1919, p. 4; Father Yorke was enraged by the closing of the auditorium; he entitled his editorial "First Class Propaganda."
43. O'Doherty, *Assignment America*, pp., 44, 64-77; *The Leader*, July 26, 1919, p. 1; De Valera mentioned his idea of the Bond drive at the AOH convention during his first visit in July.
44. P. T. Horan, Letter to John Byrne, November 1919 Box 1: Doc. No. A23.

37 No. 12 DECEMBER, 1883 25 CENTS A \$3.00 A YEAR

**The GOLDEN ERA.**

An Illustrated Monthly Magazine

Devoted to the Artistic and Industrial Progress of the West.

SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

THE GOLDEN ERA COMPANY,  
914 SOUTH STREET, SAN DIEGO, CAL.

ARTHUR WAGNER, MANAGER

## CHEAP LIVING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.



THE constant complaint that living is more expensive here than elsewhere has led to the consideration of a few economic principles and their application to family life in California. The writer makes a modest claim to some experience in household economy. He has been a cook, a sort of *chef* of his table, a lodger in a boarding house, a patron of restaurants, a boarder at hotels of fourth, third, second and first class, and a man of family.

This experience has been obtained during a series of years in California, and it is the intention with this experience and considerable observation to refute the theory that the household expenses in California are greatly in excess of those in the East. In the first place we will consider keeping bachelor hall, or hiring a room and boarding yourself. A room can be obtained in the cheaper quarters of San Francisco, Los Angeles or San Diego at five dollars per month. A large loaf of bread can be purchased for ten cents or twelve tickets for one dollar, meat can be obtained at an average of eleven cents per pound, sugar at eight cents per pound. Vegetables at low prices, cabbage for instance, five cents per head, celery five cents per bunch, potatoes one and a quarter cents per pound. With these prices a man can obtain enough provisions for a week, for a few dollars and the expenses will be about as follows:

Room rent, per week	\$1 25
Bread	30
Meat	60
Vegetables	40
Groceries	50

Total \$3 00

The reader will readily see that a single man can live by the above figures in either Los Angeles, San Francisco or San Diego, on the small sum of three dollars per week. He will have a comfortable room,

and for breakfast, eggs, coffee, bread and potatoes; for lunch, bread, tea, potatoes, cold meat or corn beef, etc.; for dinner, broiled steak, roasted potatoes, boiled apples, fried cabbage, coffee and other dishes, to suit his taste or fancy. Three dollars per week means twelve dollars per month, or one hundred and fifty dollars for one year, add fifty dollars for clothing and you have the necessary expenses of living in California on a system of boarding yourself reduced to two hundred dollars. To those who do not enjoy their own cooking, the system of renting a room and patronizing restaurants commends itself. A room can be obtained in nice, clean lodging-houses at eight dollars per month in either of the cities mentioned, and meals can be obtained at all prices from five cents to five dollars. The economical man's expenses will average about as follows:

Room rent, per week	\$2 00
Breakfasts	1 05
Lunches	70
Dinners	1 40

Total \$5 15

The total expenses of five dollars and fifteen cents includes breakfasts at fifteen cents, lunches ten cents and dinners at twenty cents. A young man should calculate on being invited out occasionally to dinner, which will enable him to double on his next meal. We herewith attach an average bill of fare and present prices of the good all-around restaurants and lunch counters:

Soups	5 cents.
Coffee or tea	5 cents.
Bowl of mush and milk	10 cents.
Plain steak (potatoes included, also bread and butter)	10 cents.
Tenderloin steak	30 cents.
Chops	10 cents.
Stews	10 cents.
Pot pies	10 cents.
Pies	5 cents.

Coffee and any kinds of cake or pie

There are of course many items not included in the above, but those accustomed to patronizing these restaurants will

## Cheap Living in Southern California



recognize the bill of fare without any accusing conscience of an over-loaded stomach. The restaurants where such prices prevail are usually kept clean, and are presided over by a woman or man who is not overly strong. These restaurants are patronized by both men and women, young men and ladies. A young man's expenses in California are about as follows, provided he is economical :

Room rent..	\$ 96 00
Board	156 00
Two everyday suits.....	30 00
One Sunday suit.....	20 00
Four suits of underwear.....	8 00
Ten pairs of socks.....	2 50
One unmentionable.....	5 00
Other wearing apparel.....	10 00
Incidentals.....	25 00
Total.....	\$352 50

Hotel living is also reasonable in California, a good room can be obtained at the Palace for two dollars per day, and room and board at leading first-class hotels for two to three dollars per day. Second-class hotels furnish room and board at from one to two dollars per day. There is no reasonable excuse for the charge that living is more expensive here than in the East. A hundred illustrations can be made to show the contrary. There are of course no cheap country hotels and family boarding houses to compare with the four dollar per week family boarding house of the Eastern and Middle States. In the matter of housekeeping the claim can be maintained that living is reasonably cheap. However it may as well be acknowledged now that people in California do not keep house cheaply, they are extravagant in the largest sense of the term. Not long ago it was the writer's privilege to examine a young woman's trunk, and here is what was found :

One silk dress.....	\$ 40 00
One woollen goods dress.....	20 00
One corduroy dress.....	10 00
A wrapper.....	4 50
Two corsets.....	3 00
One doz hose, clean and unwashed	7 50
Four shrouds.....	4 00
Two pair gaiters.....	8 50
Slippers.....	2 50
Cuffs and collars.....	1 50

Pocket book.....	1 75
Four handkerchiefs.....	3 75
Silk mitts.....	1 25
Two pair kid gloves.....	3 00
Fan.....	2 00
Hair brush and comb.....	3 00
Six bottles of perfumery.....	3 00
Hand mirror.....	1 50
Twilled silk parasol.....	3 25
Double fancy hair net.....	10
Four lots of ribbon.....	3 40
Box chocolate candy.....	25
Hair pins.....	10
Corset laces.....	06
Silk garter.....	25
Muslin gown.....	1 00
Muslin skirts.....	3 00
Bustle.....	75
Jewelry.....	100 00
Three hats.....	30 00
Etc., etc.....	10 00

Total.....\$272 91

There may be a few misnomers and some mistakes as to the prices, but it will readily be seen that there were a great many non-essential articles in the trunk. Both women and men become extravagant, and then claim that living is more expensive in California than in the East. Here is the record of a family of five that kept house on the economical Eastern plan. The family consisted of a man and wife and three children aged six, eight and twelve. They found a house of four rooms for rent in a respectable neighborhood at fifteen dollars per month, water two dollars and twenty-five cents extra. They sold their furniture in the East, and with the two hundred dollars thus obtained were enabled to furnish the house with everything that was absolutely necessary. For example, the carpet cost sixty cents per yard, nice ingrain carpet, stove \$12.90, an antique, imitation oak bed room set \$24, a bed lounge \$15, and other things in proportion. They did not complain because they could not get a genuine antique oak bed-room set for the price of an imitation set East, like so many Eastern people are inclined to do. Well, after furnishing, the man applied for a position as a track hand on the railroad, and got it. The wages were two dollars per day. He had been accustomed to \$1.50 per day on Eastern roads. He did not

complain, but was glad of the opportunity. At the end of the month he had worked twenty-six days, and received fifty-two dollars. With this money he paid rent, \$14; water bill, \$2; groceries, \$13; meat, \$6; vegetables, \$3; coal, \$2; clothing, \$5; incidentals, \$2. Total, \$47, which represented a saving of \$5 per month. He had saved \$200 in the East, and with this money he purchased a cheap resident lot, and invested his five dollars in a building association. The climate was so perfect and his health so good that at the end of three months he secured a loan of \$600 on his building shares, and erected a nice four-room cottage, and now saves his rent each month, less the sum of eight dollars which he pays to the association. His lot is constantly increasing in value; his children are growing up around him; his wife is happy and contented, while he goes to his daily toil satisfied that two dollars per day in Southern California is better than one dollar and a half in the land of cheap living. If you desire to live cheaply in San Diego or Los Angeles, you can do so. If you want to live expensively, opportunities are likewise afforded. Let us take as a further illustration the prices of fruits :

Oranges.....	15 to 25 cents per doz.
Strawberries.....	Two boxes for 25 cents.
Blackberries.....	" " " "
Raspberries.....	" " " "
Grapes.....	3 cents per pound.
Watermelons.....	10 to 25 cents.
Muskmelons.....	" " " "
Guavas.....	15 cents per box.

Bananas.....	30 cents per dozen.
Apples,	3 to 10 cents per pound, according to the season.
Prunes,	
Pears,	
Plums,	
Persimmons	
Apricots,	

Add to this the great advantage that each year brings fruit, vegetables and productions of all kinds cheaper. The next ten years will see such reductions in living expenses in Southern California that a small income will enable a family to afford the daintiest luxuries. The great beauty of this country is in its developing power. The brown hills and parched valleys changed to blossoming hillsides and fertile dales are certain in their effect and results. The consciousness of being a pioneer, an observer of this constant and increasing force of development, is worth all the luxuries of the Atlantic shores. Who would not rather be poor in California than rich in the East? Ah, but there is no poverty here, no poverty of climate, no pauperism of growth, no starving of sunshine, no monopoly of sea or hay or mountains. Every inhabitant is rich in these things. While it is well to be economical in such vulgar things as meat, drink, clothing and such like, yet all can be extravagant in the use of sun, of sea, of bay, of mountain, of air, of flowers and of God's eternal goodness. Dwellers along the shores of the ever singing seas of the Pacific.

HARR WAGNER.

#### BY THE CHRISTMAS SEA.

Came a ripple, then a splash,  
Then a whisper, then a dash,  
And the great white wave rolled in;  
Rolled in from the sea,  
The Christmas sea,  
And poured out its gift of melody,  
Soft murmurings and thundering din.

Not a pebble, not a shell,  
"Only song and sea weed smell,"  
With her words crept out a smile,  
A smile like the sea,  
The Christmas sea,  
Rippling and hubbubbing its joy to me,  
And shining with the sweetness the while.

First a ripple, then a pool,  
Then a dimple, then a shout  
Of laughter, merry and long  
Why the dearest old sea,  
The Christmas sea,  
Had nothing better to give to me  
Than itself, and the sweet old song

Just a tremble, then a thrill,  
Then "I won't," and then "I will,"  
Then the words I kept so long—  
By the dear old sea,  
The Christmas sea;  
I've nothing other to give thee  
Than myself and the sweet old song.

AL TWELL WHITNEY

## REVIEWS

W. Michael Mathes, *Reviews Editor*

### The Kemble Collections

Tucked away on the top floor of the Schubert Hall Library of the California Historical Society are the Edward C. Kemble Collections on Western Printing and Publishing. The late George Laban Harding, who gave the Society most of the materials that comprise the collections, insisted on the plural designation because the Kemble is actually four collections housed together: the typographical library of William Edward Loy (1847-1906), a Northern California printer who became active in the printing equipment and type business in San Francisco — Loy is sometimes called the “Hubert Howe Bancroft of Western Printing History” because of his inclination to collect and preserve every scrap of material that fell within his frame of interest; the archives of the notable printing firm of Taylor & Taylor, which operated in San Francisco under several names between 1896 and 1961; the typographical and printing trade periodicals collection of Haywood H. Hunt (1888-1974), a distinguished printer and designer in San Francisco during five decades of the twentieth century; and finally the printing and publishing library of Mr. Harding himself, who, until his death in 1976, was Honorary Curator of the collections.

The Kemble Collections are named in honor of Edward Cleveland Kemble (1828-1886), one of three founders of the *Alta California* newspaper in San Francisco, and the founder of Sacramento's first newspaper, the *Placer Times*. In 1858 Kemble published in the *Sacramento Daily Union*, “A History of California Newspapers,” the earliest attempt to chronicle printing history in the West on any significant scale. The Collections thus honor Kemble's pioneering efforts.

Until 1976 the story of the Kemble can be told largely through the activities of George Harding. A native of Indiana, Harding attended the Graduate

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Bruce L. Johnson is CHS Library Director and Kemble Collections Curator.

EXPLANATION  
OF THE  
POINT SYSTEM  
OF PRINTING



WITH  
SPECIMENS  
IN THE OFFICE OF THE ISLAND CITY  
PRESS  
ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA



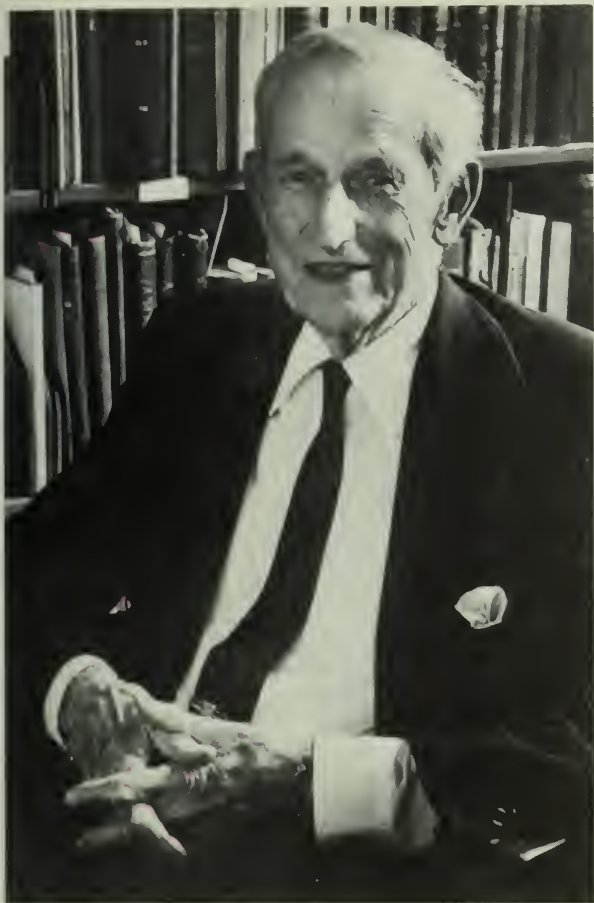
OVERLEAF Cover title of *Hawk's Explanation*, which was produced as a birthday present to his friends in an edition of 500 copies. Only one known copy exists

School of Business Administration at Harvard University. There he came under the guiding influence of several notable typographical authorities, such as William Addison Dwiggins, Daniel Berkeley Updike, and C. Chester Lane. It was at this time that he began assembling his outstanding collection of materials related to typography. Although Harding never realized his intention to enter the printing business, until his retirement in 1958 he managed to pursue both his avid interest in the history of printing and a career with Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company. After his retirement and during the remaining eighteen years of his life, the development of the Kemble Collections consumed Harding's attention.

The Collections that George Harding donated to the Society during the early 1960s consist of more than 3,500 volumes of published material, extensive pamphlet and ephemeral material, files of more than 300 periodicals, and significant manuscript holdings, all pertaining to printing, publishing, and ancillary activities, with particular emphasis on California and the West. Many materials that today are part of the Kemble were gathered by Mr. Harding in the course of research for several important publications, including *A Census of California Spanish Imprints, 1833-1845* (1933); *Don Agustin V. Zamorano, Statesman, Soldier, Craftsman and California's First Printer* (1934); *George Prescott Vance, 1851-1936* (1937); and *Charles A. Murdock, Printer and Citizen of San Francisco: An Appraisal* (1973). It seemed ironic to Mr. Harding that whereas the records of banking, lumber, and shipping industries, the motion picture industry, the petroleum industry, and many other businesses and corporations are collected and preserved, the industry that records the deeds and chronicles the history of all others — i.e., the printing industry — should not have a library devoted to its own history. The Kemble Collections were formed and developed by George Harding to help fill the void.

Accounting records of early California businesses, including printers, are among the most revealing of sources, as are also business correspondence and personal journals. Manuscript materials in the Kemble include the first account book of the *Alta California* newspaper for 1849-1850; the 1857-1859 accounts of the noted San Francisco printing firm of O'Meara & Painter; and the accounts of the San Francisco type foundry of Andrew Foreman & Son, 1893-1906. The *Alta California* account book was discovered in a rummage shop in Oakland in 1940 — its pages had been pasted over with newspaper clippings. This priceless California printing incunabulum was purchased for 50¢, was restored by a highly competent bookbinder, and was later acquired by Mr. Harding. Another unique resource is the journal of Nelson Crocker Hawks, inventor of the American Point System for the measurement of the body size of printing type, covering more than forty years between 1855 and 1896. The Kemble was recently fortunate to acquire what seems to be a unique copy of Hawks's *Explanation of the Point System of Printing Type, with Specimens* (Alameda, 1918). In this rare pamphlet, printed in his declining years, Hawks makes his own claim to be the inventor of the American Point System, which he says "dates back to 1878, originating in the Pacific Type Foundry, San Francisco."

Fifty-three volumes of the records of Blake, Moffitt & Towne, 1868-1893, paper merchants for many printers of the Pacific Coast, are another important manuscript source. These materials are complemented by the manuscript letter books of the printing and publishing firms of Whitton, Towne & Company, and Towne & Bacon, for the years 1856 through 1868. The Kemble Collections also include the diary of San Francisco bookseller, Epes Ellery; twenty boxes of manuscripts and forty-nine volumes of newspaper clippings assembled by Jerome Alfred Hart (1854-1937), editor of *The Argonaut* in San Fran-



*George Harding, past president of the California Historical Society, donated the bulk of the Kemble Collections to the CHS Library in the early 1960s.*

cisco; the George L. Harding (1893-1976) Papers; the Haywood H. Hunt (1888-1974) Papers; and the recently deposited collection of manuscript materials (twenty-five transfer boxes) from the files of American West Publishing Company.

Specimen books of type faces are issued both by type foundries and by printers to exhibit the range of styles and sizes available from a particular company. Those books from foundries are more significant perhaps, and the Kemble houses the third largest collection in the country ranging from the early nineteenth century to the present. Specimen books from California firms — Faulkner & Son, Painter & Company, Palmer & Rey, and Pacific Type Foundry — are generously represented. One notable gem is the second specimen book issued about 1868 by the California Type Foundry of William Faulkner & Son; the Kemble holds two copies (one is complete, the other is missing the front cover) that are apparently

unique, as no others have ever been reported.

One aspect of the Library of the California Historical Society that makes it particularly useful to researchers is a remarkable card catalog which provides that odd bit of information or hidden citation to an obscure periodical article — information or citations that would have been forever lost but for the indexing efforts of dedicated volunteers and staff members. The card catalog of the Kemble exhibits the same style of usefulness. Nearly 250 periodicals and serial titles are held by the Kemble — *The Colophon*, *The Fleuron*, *The Inland Printer*, *Pacific Printer & Publisher*, *Western Printer & Lithographer*, etc. — and most of these have been indexed and citations have been included in the card catalog. Information that most likely would have been locked away in the pages of an inaccessible periodical is suddenly available to any researcher. On one recent occasion the Curator of the Kemble received a call from London requesting that a certain name be checked in Kemble's "remarkable card catalog;" five useful entries were located.

The Taylor & Taylor Archives form a particularly important part of the Kemble Collections. A gift to the Kemble and the Society by James Welsh Elliott (1904-1977), last president of the company, the files of this great San Francisco printing house are perhaps unique in the United States; only the Platin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp contains as complete an archive of a printing office. The archives consist of more than four hundred fifty filing boxes of work dockets, job tickets, estimates, correspondence, and specimens of folders, pamphlets, brochures, and broadsides for the years 1906-1961. Included are printers' copies of the hundreds of books, pamphlets, periodicals and ephemera designed and printed by the firm. The Taylor & Taylor Archives afford a unique opportunity to view the inner workings of an important California printing firm in the period before offset lithography invaded the traditional preserves of letterpress printing.



Cover title of the California Type Foundry Company's second specimen book, the earliest known specimen book of a Western type foundry. No known copy of the company's first specimen book survives.



*James Welsh Elliott presented the Kemble Collections with the Taylor & Taylor Archives. The Files of this great printing house are perhaps unique in the United States.*

Besides the book, periodical, and manuscript collections, the Kemble houses a vast collection of ephemeral materials issued by and about printers and publishers, and the people and organizations that serve them. Filling more than forty large file drawers and one hundred fifty boxes, this collection contains examples of job printing, informative letters on and samples of embossing, much biographical material, booksellers' catalogs and labels, bookplates, exemplars of the work of many handpress printers and a large collection of broadsides printed by John Henry Nash. There is also a growing collection of printing-related photographs, which was recently augmented by the acquisition of a collection of more than 2,200 photographs of personalities important in the history of Western printing, lithography, and bookbinding.

*The Kemble Occasional*, a mini-journal and newsletter, is issued by subscription three times a year. It has included in its pages research on early printing journals, news of events in the printing and collecting fields that affect the Collections, and memorial articles. The Collections are open Wednesday through Friday, between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and at other times by appointment.

Given the fact that the core collections of the California Historical Society Library were formed originally as the private collections of persons intimately involved with the Society — C. Templeton Crocker, Henry Wagner, etc. — it is most fitting that the Kemble Collections should also have been the gift of George L. Harding, a former president of the Society. Since Mr. Harding's passing five years ago, Mrs. Dorothea Huggins Harding has acted as patron of the Kemble in the manner established by her husband. Her efforts and contributions have helped assure the continued development of the Kemble Collections, and have culminated more than half a century of dedication to the California Historical Society and its libraries. Additional support is given by the Friends of the Kemble Collections, a group of in-



terested persons formed two years ago for that purpose.

The Collections may be named in honor of California's first historian of printing, but they stand as a monument to George L. Harding, Past President, Patron, and Fellow of the California Historical Society, whose many and substantial contributions carry a value that cannot be measured in mere dollars.

The photographs are from the CHS Library

## Book Reviews

### *Missions.*

Photographs by Stanley Truman. Text by W. Michael Mathes (San Francisco & Los Angeles: California Historical Society, 1980. 96 pp. \$35.00).

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*Reviewed by Fr. Lino Gómez Canedo, Resident Member of the Academy of American Franciscan History and author of several books on the American Franciscan Missions.*

This is certainly not the first time that the missions of California are presented through photographs, rather, perhaps they are the most photographed monuments and landscapes of all the Americas. California has had the good fortune of having, for nearly a century, generous and understanding persons who, with exemplary dedication, have labored to save the relics of her past. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to find something comparable to the work of Dr. Truman as revealed in this book. His unique sensibility has enabled him to see and capture that which is hidden beneath the surface; his art enhances everything it touches and gives feeling and value to that which, at first glance, appears insignificant. The simple beauty of Santa Inés, the enchantment of San Miguel with its bell tower and fountain, the arches of San Antonio, the countryside of Carmel, the tower of San Carlos — all are a delight to the eyes and the mind.

These photographs also constitute a valuable complement to historical documents, and at the same time are a beautiful source of knowledge for the future. They help us to understand what these institutions and monuments were, and will help future generations understand what they are now and the love expressed in their preservation.

Dr. Mathes, for his part, introduces with knowledge, style and understanding, the history of the missionary enterprise in California. In depth he depicts the historical scene of sacrifices, labors, perseverance, successes and failures, through which Alta California was born, grew and died during the Hispanic period. Beginning with reference to Spanish institutions transferred to the New World, he explains what the mission was. The missions of Alta California began in Baja California where the Jesuits, in an unfavorable geographic and human environment, were able to establish seventeen missions during a period of seventy years (1697-1767). More fortunate, the Franciscans founded eighteen missions in Alta California during a period of only twenty-nine years (1769-1799), and three

more up to 1823 during the years in which political events, wars, interests of landowners and sectarian or over-idealistic reformers, began the ruin of the entire missionary enterprise.

This is a beautiful book in which everything reflects maximum care: the texts, photographs, printing, and binding. A precious production for which thanks must be given to the California Historical Society.

### *Literary San Francisco; a Pictorial History from Its Beginnings to the Present Day.*

By Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters (San Francisco: City Lights Books and Harper & Row, 1980. xi, 254 pp. \$15.95.)

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*Reviewed by David Derus, Professor of English, University of San Francisco.*

This extensive collection of photographs with its accompanying text makes a claim upon the reader as the first literary history of San Francisco. It is "an eccentric shot at it," confesses Lawrence Ferlinghetti, one of its co-authors, "full of our own predilections and prejudices." The disclaimer understates the case, particularly for the Ferlinghetti text, the years from 1910 to the present. There is a great mass of literature to be surveyed and the problem of selection is enormous. The author solves it by the application everywhere of a vague romantic radicalism and anti-intellectualism, which quite submerge any discussion of the literature as such. The historical narrative itself lacks continuity and transition, often leaving the reader lost in a parenthesis or high and dry among the pictures.

Even the geography is a little strange. Rabindranath Tagore occupies a page and a half, apparently on the basis of a single lecture given in the city. Kathleen Norris gets a paragraph, although millions of Americans got their image of the Bay area from her popular romances. Dylan Thomas's visits rate three pages; the quieter works of a George Oppen or a George Hitchcock barely get them their picture in. Fiction writers seem of little interest to Ferlinghetti, unless they are Third World or Dashiell Hammett. They do not hang out together, hence create no "happenings." The local media is berated for ignoring the likes of Mark Harris, Leo Litvak, Tillie Olsen, Alice



Adams, Ella Leffland, and Maxine Hong Kingston. In vain do we look for so much as a snapshot of them in *Literary San Francisco*!

Ferlinghetti's achievements as a poet and avant-garde publisher are substantial; as a prose stylist they are more doubtful. This passage on Robinson Jeffers is typical: "Today Jeffers is more of a monument of stone than he is a popular poet. His final 'disgust with the human species in toto' (as Alfred Kazin said in *On Native Grounds*) hardly turned on new generations kicking over the traces of the eternal guilt-trip laid on the world by Christian dogma. ('Jesus died for your sins.' But so did Janis Joplin.)" (p. 140).

Nancy J. Peters, who is co-director and editor of City Lights Books, provides the text and photos up to 1910. Although her angle of vision on literature is roughly similar to Ferlinghetti's, she writes with a lighter touch and manages to keep good proportion within a large body of material. She has a good ear for the interesting anecdote, the personal recollection, or a line or two of old poetry. Picture and text work together, even where they seem remote from imaginative literature. Ms. Peters acknowledges her debt especially to the archives of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley and the cooperation of Professor James D. Hart. The book as a whole would certainly have gained in unity and substance had she also written the modern period, using the City Lights poet as a valued resource person.

*San Diego: California's Cornerstone.*

By Iris H. W. Engstrand. (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Continental Heritage Press, 1980. 224 pp. \$24.95).

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*Reviewed by Ray Brandes, Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor of History, University of San Diego.*

Continental Heritage Press' latest history in their series on American cities is a handsome contribution to a city as rich in history as any in this nation. The work reflects the creativity and dynamism of Dr. Engstrand, Chairman and Professor, Department of History, University of San Diego, and represents a showcase for part of the superb photograph collection of the Title Insurance/San Diego Historical Society collections gathered by Larry and Jane Booth. Thomas L. Scharf served as historic photo editor.

The contents are a mixture of well-written text for the lay person and a large selection of photos, vintage and recent, punctuated by special sections dealing with selected historical features. Added to this is a "Chronology of Events" section, a brief bibliographical essay and in light of the Chamber of Commerce contribution and partnership, a section which provides abbreviated histories of current firms in business and industry.

Design and layout are always difficult where text and illustrations share equal billing, but the staff designers have arranged the material in a very natural flowing way, trac-



*San Diego Stadium, which seats 50,000, helped to bring major league sports to the city following its opening in 1967.*



*"Fishing boats; Fisherman's Wharf, Monterey, California," by Lillie May Nicholson. Opposite is her painting "Street Scene, Venice Italy."*



ing San Diego historically from prehistory to recent times. While photo selection (color and black and white) is outstanding because it highlights people and events, some reproduction suffers, however, as on the map, p. 10; the sepia on pp. 30-31, and the lack of true color in some of the colorwork.

The author highlights what she regards as the keystone periods in the birthplace of California including the Founding Period, the Mexican Era, the period from 1846 to 1870 when Americans came from out of the east to change the face of the city, the time when Alonzo Horton began the new city with his Horton House and strange sized city blocks. The city experienced busts and booms at least seven times which are chronicled. During the first decade of this century, the Panama Canal, Balboa Park and the first World's Fair sparked a period of growth. During the 1920s the decade of prosperity and the 1930s decade of despair found only a Marxian relief because of the second world war, which did change the face of the town into a modern city.

After the war, with booms and busts on a minor scale, the city found a new place with aviation and the aerospace industry, with light industry and pollution free businesses. City parks, recreation, major league franchises in football, basketball, soccer and tennis among others are added attractions to a city which is considered one of the finest and cleanest in North America. Some of the more significant topics covered in depth are the water problems, in which discussion is related to the arid environment, questions over Spanish rights, the Hatfield rainmaking experiment and resulting political means to bring water from long distances to make San Diego green.

Dr. Engstrand's narrative is free flowing and smoothly written. She has in this short history given a run through

of the events significant to San Diego history while keeping in mind that she is giving word pictures of the story of the nation's ninth largest city. While other works on local history in recent times have omitted current events, her book succinctly describes the thinking and the planning of the present administrative agencies. Enhanced by its colorful design, the book is a credit to the Continental Heritage Press series.

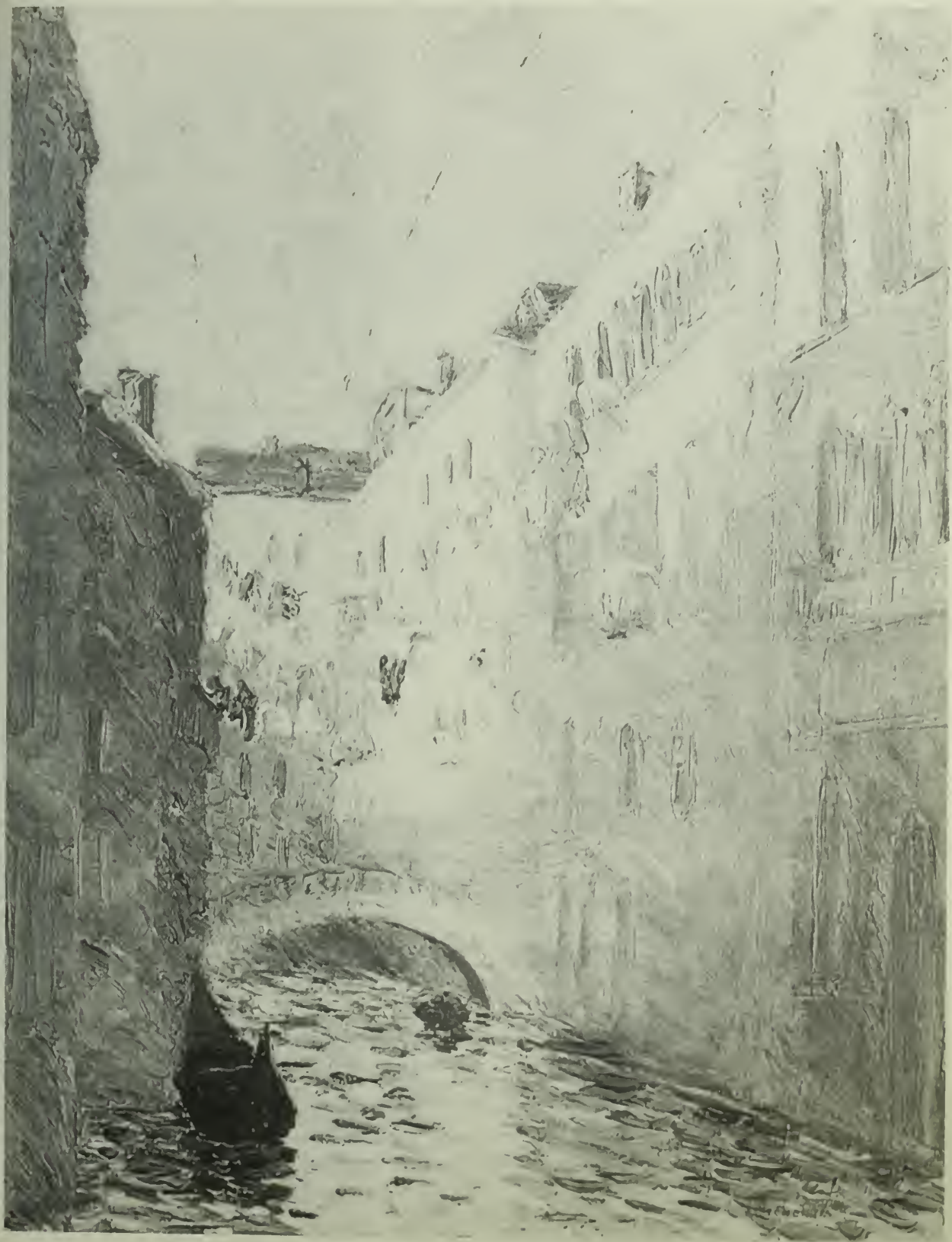
*Lillie May Nicholson 1884-1964: An Artist Rediscovered.*

By Walter A. Nelson-Rees. Foreword by Joseph Armstrong Baird, Jr. Including a complete catalog of her known works. (Oakland: WIM, 1981. 85pp. \$35.00.)

*Reviewed by Joy Berry, CHS Reference Librarian.*

This is a wonderful example of a labor of love on the part of Dr. Walter Nelson-Rees, a scientist whose love of art led him to Lillie May Nicholson's only living sister. In April, 1979, she showed him a large number of Miss Nicholson's works hung throughout the family ranch house near Watsonville. At this time, Miss Nicholson's paint boxes, easels, and palettes were found in the wash house, along with a large collection of her paintings. When she closed her studio in Pacific Grove in 1938, Miss Nicholson stored them at the ranch in two old trunks. They included scenes of Monterey and Pacific Grove, sketches done in her youth, works of her student days at the San Francisco Art Institute, and her European paintings.

Curiously, Dr. Nelson-Rees found no mention of this





talented artist in any reviews, exhibition catalogues, or historical accounts of northern California artists of that period. According to Dr. Nelson-Rees, Miss Nicholson was lacking in self-esteem as an artist, and at one period attempted to burn all of her paintings. This plus her somewhat reclusive nature, probably account in part for her relatively obscure reputation as a painter.

Lillie May Nicholson led an interesting and unusual life. She taught arithmetic and geometry in Hawaii in her teens; later taught in Watsonville; and then spent three years in Japan teaching English and studying painting from a J. Taguchi. Miss Nicholson was thirty-two years old when she returned from Japan and enrolled in the San Francisco Institute of Art. Five years later at the age of 37, she took off for a trip around the world. She travelled widely, but artistically seemed to prefer France, judging by the number of paintings of Etaples, the French seacoast south of Bourgogne, and the waterways in northern France and Paris. Her work clearly reflects the style of the French Impressionists, and especially Claude Monet, whom she obviously admired. Sometime in the early 1920s she set up her studio in Pacific Grove, and after a long career as an artist, she went to work in her late fifties as a war-time aircraft mechanic.

It is a joy to discover Lillie May Nicholson through Dr. Nelson-Rees's book. We are indebted to him for his long hours of research, and for weaving together a colorful and interesting account of a very unusual woman and a gifted artist. The book is profusely illustrated with excellent color plates of Miss Nicholson's paintings.

*One of Benny's Faces: A Study of Beniamino Bufano, 1886-1970, The Man Behind The Artist.*

By Virginia B. Lewin (Hicksville, N.Y. (Exposition Press, 1980. ix, 226 pp. \$10.50).

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*Reviewed by Hille Sonin, Head Acquisitions Librarian at the University of San Francisco.*

This is an intriguing volume about a remarkable man who for years contributed to the San Francisco tradition of eccentric celebrities. As such, many remember the legendary Benny Bufano. The book is neither a biography in the usual sense, nor a critique of Bufano as an artist. Rather, it

is an informed interpretation of the "bewildering enigma" and the mysterious plurality of personalities that was Beniamino Bufano, and a commentary on "a tragic little man whom so few really knew." In the spirit of the "subjective truth" which Bufano preferred, this study is styled as "fiction within a framework of fact."

If we enter into the spirit in which this work is presented, the story that unfolds becomes a fascinating tale which traces the artist's life from his childhood in Italy and the difficult days of an immigrant youth in New York through the early years in San Francisco and his stay in China, the romance with the author and the dramatic events of the break-up of their marriage in Paris, to its aftermath in California. All of it is replete with dialogue and incisive descriptions of emotional experiences.

The central portion of the volume is devoted to the period of the author's relationship in the mid-1920s with Bufano — ranging from idealistic romantic love to bitter disillusionment. The story covers their courtship in San Francisco, the world tour and the Paris sojourn. Much as the early chapters recount the first four decades of Bufano's life, so do the last chapters record impressions of his last four decades.

Lewin makes a sincere and serious effort to depict the famous sculptor as objectively as possible from an intimate viewpoint. Sometimes one gets the impression that the author is still attempting to fathom the essence of that flamboyant enigmatic showman of whose genius, charm, glory and spirituality she convinces the reader as she simultaneously exposes him as an unconscionable liar, an outrageous male chauvinist and a monumental egotist. Artistic techniques and creations are only discussed in so far as they inform the author's objective to illuminate the artist as a man, from the perspective of a sensitive woman. As a reflection of her own reaction to what she perceived as the tragic coarsening of Bufano's sensibilities, the author relates a disquisition by Raoul Renneau on a monumental woodcarving done by Bufano in Paris, in which Renneau assumes that the cynicism and banality of the age in which the artist lived had invaded him and changed him into its own likeness, which changed the mood and style of his art, so that the sculpture appears "heavy, rigid, nonspiritual, with machinelike perfection of detail."

While recognizing the singular focus of the book, one cannot help regretting that the world at large is not brought into sharper focus. This is particularly noticeable in the Parisian episodes, since Bufano's association with



contemporary artists is well known. More regrettable is the stylistic idiosyncrasy of constantly referring to Bufano as "the little artist." This mars the fine fabric of an otherwise interesting interpretation, which adds yet another facet to the Bufano legend.

### *Santa Cruz, The Early Years, The Collected Historical Writings of Leon Rowland.*

Edited by: Michael S. Gant (Santa Cruz: Paper Vision Press, 1980. xvii, 273 pp. Notes, Index, \$7.95).

### *Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains.*

By John V. Young (Santa Cruz: Paper Vision Press, 1979. xiv, 153 pp. \$8.95).

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*Reviewed by David A. Williams, Professor Emeritus, History, California State University, Long Beach and author of David C. Broderick, a Political Portrait and co-author of California, a History of the Golden State.*

*Santa Cruz, The Early Years* is a collection of the writings on historical subjects of an able and industrious newspaperman who had an abiding interest in the history of the greater Santa Cruz area. Leon Rowland came to Santa Cruz in 1929 and shortly thereafter became a prominent member of the news world. Upon his death at sixty-seven in 1952, he was a veteran of the newspaper game, a man who had written millions of words and in the process had become a past master at the art of digging out the relevant facts, assembling them into a coherent package, and presenting them in clear readable prose. His avocation was history, especially the history of Early California and the Santa Cruz area. It was more than a mere interest as evidenced by his industrious research in far flung archives during holidays and vacations. And it is evidenced as well by the mass of material which he published over the years and which is collected within these pages.

The collection assembled and edited "with a light hand" by Michael S. Gant reflects the personal interests of Rowland. They were wide ranging around a central theme of people. He wrote of buildings and farms, of railroads and rancherias, padres and fishermen, crops and forests, ad infinitum. It is hard to envision a historical question or fact

about this area which is not likely to appear in this collection. In breath, these findings of Rowland are likely to become an indispensable aid to all serious students of Santa Cruz history, a logical starting point for innumerable inquiries. From this point, researchers will begin, and while they may go far beyond Rowland as they pursue their line of investigation, they will have reason to be thankful for his departure point. The notes which Rowland made are in the University of California at Santa Cruz library, providing, in many cases, additional leads to the researcher.

*Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains* is also the work of a newspaper man whose work as a journalist allowed him to pursue a personal interest in local history. Assigned to a rural beat which lay between San Jose and Santa Cruz in the early 1930s, Young produced a series of feature articles on the pioneer people and places of the region which appeared in the *San Jose Mercury Herald* in 1934. It was a fortunate circumstance which brought Mr. Young to the scene at that time, for the area was still marked with the towns and settlements of yesterday, and there were any number of pioneer figures around who could contribute to his research into the recent past.

The result of his inquiring mind and the cooperation of any number of old-timers is a book which will be prized by anyone interested in local history. Collected and revised somewhat in 1979, the articles about Wright's Station, Patchen, and Mountain Charley McKiernan are written in the clear prose which newspaper men habitually use, and they provide the modern reader with interesting and illuminating sketches of a world which once existed but today is marked with few remnants of another era. It was a brief colorful period when timber, vineyards, bearfights, and railroads were prominent features of the life and times.

Both of these accounts are worthwhile products, although both have their flaws. Each tends to be episodic, comprised of short sketches loosely connected which provide the essential facts but sometimes leave the reader with a tantalizing and unsatisfied interest. Each reflects its journalist author. Each will, no doubt, be used by another author who attempts a larger work narrative of description, analysis, and interpretation.

The photograph of San Diego Stadium is courtesy of the San Diego Chargers. Copies of the Nicholson paintings were supplied by Walter A. Nelson-Rees.

## Book Notices

Compiled by Gary F. Kurutz

*The Cowboy Catalog.* By Sandra Kauffman. (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1980. 192 pp. \$10.95 paper, \$22.50 cloth). Lavishly illustrated and designed to appeal to modern cowboys and "city slickers" alike, it "is the complete compendium of cowboy clothes, equipment, and traditions — presenting the very best in Western gear and cowboy lore."

*Test Excavation of LAN - 1016 ah: The Ontiveros Adobe Santa Fe Springs, California.* By Vance G. Bente. (Pacific Palisades: Greenwood and Associates, 1980. 145 pp.). According to the principal investigator, Robert S. Greenwood, "This research, combining historical and archaeological investigations, resulted in a totally unexpected association with Mission San Juan Capistrano and what may be the first description and analysis of activities at the matanza."

*The Sidewalk Companion to Santa Cruz Architecture.* Revised Edition. By John Chase. (Santa Cruz: The Paper Vision Press, 1979. 374 pp. \$9.95 paper). In this revised edition, the author has added much valuable material on the area's twentieth century architecture. As well, Chase includes additional photographs, revisions, a glossary, and biographies of prominent local architects.

*The San Joaquin Valley.* By Nick Zachreson. Photographs by Richard Hammond. (Visalia-Corralitos, by the authors, 1979. \$25.00). In this superb photographic essay, the authors captured the essence of the great San Joaquin Valley. According to Hammond, "on July 4, 1978, Nick Zachreson and I embarked upon an 18-month project that would explore the San Joaquin Valley and document our experiences. The goal of our project was to give definition to the region. . . ."

*Riverman, Desertman.* By Camiel Dekens. (Rubidoux: Historical Commission Press, 1980. 111 pp. \$7.00 paper). Originally published in 1963, this second edition presents the story of the Palo Verde Valley in eastern Riverside County from 1912 to 1922. It is based on the reminiscences of Camiel Dekens as told to the newspaper writer and historian Tom Patterson.

*Catalogue of the Regional Oral History Office, 1954-1979.* By Suzanne B. Riess and Willa K. Baum, editors. (Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, University of California, 1980. 144 pp. \$6.50 paper). This valuable guide to the Bancroft Library's impressive oral history collection contains 392 entries, describing 468 interviews. "Here is ROHO's

## Book Notices

guide to San Francisco Bay Area History, California history, western history, U.S. political history, women's history, intellectual history, history of science, the arts, agriculture, land use, conservation, labor, business."

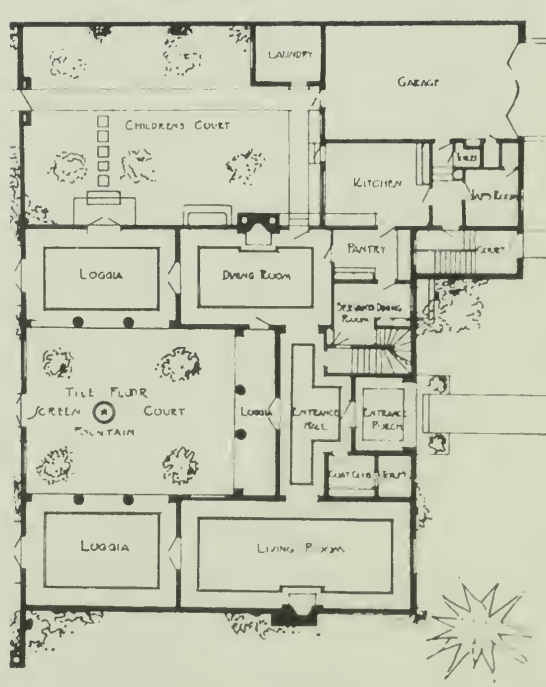
*Charles III and the Revival of Spain.* By Anthony H. Hall. (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980. 402 pp. \$13.50 paper, \$21.00 cloth). This book provides a fine study of Spanish reform policies during the height of the Enlightenment. Such policies were the background for Spain's expansion into California in 1769.

*The Democratic Art. An Exhibition on the History of Chromolithography in America. 1840-1900.* By Peter C. Marzio. (Fort Worth, Texas: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1979. 112 pp. Publisher, Box 2365 Fort Worth, Texas 76101). Marzio has written a valuable study of the art of lithography in general and provided a superb overview of the complicated chromolithographic process. He covers the work of such celebrated firms as Currier and Ives, Julius Bien, and L. Prang and Company — companies that produced such important illustrations of the American West via the colorful but little appreciated medium of the chromo.

*California Design. 1910.* By Timothy J. Anderson, Eudora M. Moore and Robert Winter, editors. (Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith, 1980. 144 pp. \$11.95). This "lavishly" illustrated book describes the arts and crafts movement in California from 1895 to 1915 and reviews a variety of mediums that flourished at the time including painting, ceramics, pottery, furniture, and architecture. It is a reprint of the 1974 exhibit catalog.

*Rosa May: The Search for a Mining Camp Legend.* By George Williams. (Riverside: Tree by the River Publishing, 1980). Describes the story of the legendary Rosa May, "a mining camp prostitute who worked the brothels of Virginia City and Carson City, Nevada during the 1870s, 80s and 90s and . . ." her life in the mining town of Bodie.

*Day Tours in and around Los Angeles.* By J. E. Spencer, editor. (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1980. 368 pp. \$6.95 paper). This second edition "first presents a comprehensive overview of the entire region and then offers descriptions and carefully detailed driving directions, with maps, for fourteen one-day tours of the different parts of the Los Angeles area."



Floor plan of the Timkin house, designed by Irving Gill, is from *California Design, 1910*.



*Museums and Sites of Historical Interest in Oregon.* By Oregon Historical Society. (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1980. 210 pp. \$5.95 paper). This useful volume provides precise information on museums, galleries, and historic sites. It is organized by county, contains maps, and includes points of interest in Northern California.

*Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History.* By Robert S. Fogarty. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980. 271 pp. \$29.95). Fogarty's dictionary represents a major reference tool for this fascinating aspect of U.S. history. Included are biographies, descriptions of communities, an annotated list of communal and utopian societies, and a useful descriptive bibliography. Fogarty provides coverage of the major California experiments but excludes descriptions of Fountain Grove, Kratona, Holy City, etc.

*Mariano Malarin. A Life that Spanned Two Cultures.* By Albert Shumate. (Cupertino: California History Center, De Anza College, 1980. 37 pp.). The basis of this slender volume is the publication of Malarin's dictation to one of H. H. Bancroft's agents in 1891. One of Monterey County's most influential residents, Malarin describes life in Mexican California and the difficulties and triumphs he experienced in the decades following the American takeover. Dr. Shumate includes a lucid biographical introduction.

*Traces.* By Rick Steber, Don Gray, and Jerry Gildemeister. (Union, Oregon: The Bear Wallow Publishing Company, 1980. 212 pp. \$31.50). The story of still-living pioneers of the Oregon Trail is the subject of this colorfully illustrated volume. The publishers embellished the interviews of these pioneers with 56 pages of color plates.

*March to South Pass: Lieutenant William B. Franklin's Journal of the Kearney Expedition of 1845.* Washington, D.C. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Engineers, 1980. 41 pp. \$2.50). The publication of Lt. Franklin's journal is the first in a new series of the Corps of Engineers Historical Studies. According to the introduction, it complements the published accounts of Carleton and Cook relative to Kearney's march to the Rockies. As well, Franklin's narrative adds to the understanding of the Oregon Trail and operations of the frontier army.

*The Enemy Among Us. A Story of Witch-Hunting in the McCarthy Era.* By Frank Rowe. (Sacramento: Cougar Books, 1980. 157 pp. \$5.95). Rowe, in this book, retells

his experiences as a professor at San Francisco State University, subsequent dismissal for refusing to sign the loyalty oath, and his 2 year fight for reinstatement. It is an extraordinary story of one person's fight for civil liberties during an era of intellectual hysteria.

*Room and Time Enough. The Land of Mary Austin.* Photographs by Morley Baer and Introduction by Augusta Fink. (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1979. 75 pp. \$20.00). Inspired by the writings of Mary Austin and the land she loved, photographer Baer and historian Fink have collaborated to produce this handsome publication. Baer's photographs of the Owens Valley, Monterey Peninsula, and the Southwest present a stunning view of the "land of Mary Austin."

The illustration is courtesy of Peregrine Smith Publishers.

# California Check List

By Joy Berry, *Reference Librarian*

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent publications, including reprints or revised editions, which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

Allen, Peter C. *Stanford: From the Foothills to the Bay*. Stanford: Stanford Alumni Association/Stanford Historical Society, 1980. 228 pp. \$40.00.

Andrews, Peter. *California: A Guide to Inns of California*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980. 96 pp.

Benediktsson, Thomas E. *George Sterling*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980. 183 pp. \$11.95.

Bierce, Ambrose. *A Vision of Doom*. Compiled, edited, and introduced by Donald Sidney-Fryer. First edition. West Kingston, R.I.: Donald M. Grant, 1980. 110 pp. \$12.00.

Bond, Marshall, Jr. *Judge Miller of Jack London's Call of the Wild*. Santa Barbara: Marshall Bond, Jr., 1980. 25 pp. Available at: Jack London Museum, Box 337, Glen Ellen, CA 95442. \$2.85.

Brown, Peter H. *The Real Oscar: The Story Behind the Academy Awards*. New York: Arlington House, 1981. \$15.95.

California Institute for Rural Studies. *Getting Bigger: Large Scale Farming in California, and 1978 Directory of California's 200 Largest Farm Operators*. Davis: California Institute for Rural Studies, 1980. 104 pp.

Campbell, John Carden. *Houses of Gold*. San Diego: Howell-North Books, 1981. 160 pp. \$15.00.

Chaney, Lindsay and Michael Cieply. *The Hearsts: Family and Empire - The Later Years*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981. \$16.95.

Charlton, Leigh and Annette Swanberg. *Glad Rags II*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1981. Publisher, 870 Market, Suite 915, San Francisco, 94102. \$7.95 (paper).

Chen, Jack. *The Chinese of America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1981. 288 pp. \$15.95.

Cogan, Sara G. *The Jews of Los Angeles, 1849-1945*. Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1980. 237 pp. Publisher, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, 94705. \$28.07 (cloth); \$17.42 (paper).

Cole-Weston: *Eighteen Photographs*. Foreword by Ben Maddow. Introduction by Charis Wilson. Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1981. 56 pp. \$19.95 (paper); \$300.00 (cloth, limited edition).

Colombo, John Robert. *Popcorn in Paradise: The Wit and Wisdom of Hollywood*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.

Conley, Frances. *First Settlers, The Castros of Rancho San Pablo*. San Pablo: San Pablo Historical and Museum Society, 1980. 27 pp. Publisher, 1 Alvarado Square, San Pablo, 94806. \$2.50.

Culliney, John L. *Exploring Underwater: The Sierra Club Guide to Scuba and Snorkeling*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1980.

Davis, Douglas F. *The White Redwoods: Ghosts of the Forest*. Happy Camp: Naturegraph Publishers, 1980. Publisher, 3543 Indian Creek Road, Happy Camp, 96039.

Dillon, Richard. *Great Expectations: The Story of Benicia, California*. Benicia: Benicia Heritage Books, Inc., 1981. Publisher, c/o Bank of America, Post Office Box 37, Benicia, 94510. \$17.50.

Doran, Adelaide LeMert. *Pieces of Eight: Channel Islands. A Bibliographical Guide and Source Book*. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1981. 340 pp. \$26.50.

Dunscomb, Guy L. and Fred A. Stindt. *Western Pacific Steam Locomotives, Passenger Trains and Cars*. Authors, 1981. Authors, Guy L. Dunscomb, 2502 Fremont Ave., Modesto, 95350; or Fred A. Stindt, 3353 Riviera West Dr., Kelseyville, 95451. \$40.81

- Ellhott, Virgil L. *San Francisco Statistical Abstract, 1980*. San Francisco: Statistical Press, 1980. Publisher, P.O. Box 11019, San Francisco, 94103. \$4.50.
- Finnerty, W. Patrick, et al. *Community Structure and Trade at Isthmus Cove: A Salvage Excavation on Catalina Island*. Reprint. Ramona: Acoma Books, 1981. 31 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 4, Ramona, 92065. \$2.95.
- Foreman, Richard L. *Indian Water Rights: A Public Policy and Administrative Mess*. Phoenix, AZ: Interstate Printers & Publishers, Inc., 1981. 246 pp. Author, Dept. of Governmental Affairs, Salt River Project, P.O. Box 1980, Phoenix, 85001. \$8.95.
- Foster, Lee. *Backyard Farming*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1981. Publisher, 870 Market, Suite 915, San Francisco, 94102. \$4.95 (paper).
- Garate, Donald T. *Echandia: The Unique Story of a Basque Immigrant*. Susanville: Lassen County Historical Society, 1980. 106 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 321, Susanville, 96130. \$6.50.
- Gilbert, Benjamin F. *Washington Square, 1857-1979: The History of San Jose State University*. 223 pp.
- Gleye, Paul. *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. San Diego: Howell-North Books, 1981. 236 pp. \$35.00.
- Grosser, Morton. *Gossamer Odyssey: The Triumph of Human-Powered Flight*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1981. \$14.95.
- Hart, Herbert M. *Tour Guide to Old Forts of Oregon, Idaho, Washington and California*. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Co. and Ft. Collins, Colorado: The Old Army Press, 1981. 54 pp. Pruett Publishing Co., 3235 Prairie Ave., Boulder, Colorado, 80301. \$3.95.
- Hart, Herbert M. *Tour Guide to Old Western Forts*. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Co., 1980. 212 pp. Publisher, 3235 Prairie Ave., Boulder, CO 80301. \$22.50.
- Heaston, Michael D. *From Mississippi to California*. Austin, Texas: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1981.
- Higman, Charles. *Errol Flynn: The Untold Story*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980. 370 pp.
- Hoffman, Will. *Sagas of Old Western Travel and Transport*. San Diego: Howell-North Books, 1981. 288 pp. \$25.00.
- Howard, Donald M. *Bastions By the Bay: New Documentation on the Royal Presidio of Monterey*. Carmel: Monterey County Archaeological Society, 1981. Publisher, P.O. Box 4606, Carmel, 93921. \$16.95.
- Hymen, Dian Davis. *Sew, Recycle, and Save*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1981. Publisher, 870 Market, Suite 915, San Francisco, 94102. \$4.95 (paper).
- Jacobs, Diane. *Hollywood Renaissance*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1980.
- Kahn, Judd. *Imperial San Francisco: Politics and Planning in an American City, 1897-1906*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1979. 263 pp. \$17.95.
- Kauffman, Sandra. *The Cowboy Catalog*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1980. 192 pp.
- Keeler, Charles. *The Simple Home*. 1904. Reprint. Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1981. 120 pp. \$9.95 (cloth).
- Kostilbas-Davis, James. *The Barrymores: The Royal Family in Hollywood*. New York: Crown, 1981. \$19.95.
- Lamour, Dorothy. *My Side of the Road*, as told to Dick McInnes. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980.
- Lane, Mark. *The Strongest Poison*. New York: Hawthorne Books, 1980. 494 pp.
- Lewis, Oscar. *San Francisco: Mission to Metropolis*. 2nd edition. San Diego: Howell-North Books, 1981. 288 pp. \$25.00.
- Livsey, Clara G. *The Manson Women: A "Family" Portrait*. New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1980. 244 pp.
- Minshall, Herbert L. *Window on the Sea*. La Jolla: Copley Books. 190 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 957, La Jolla, 92038.
- McGuckin, John H. *St. Paul's Parish: A Century of Service, 1889-1980*. San Francisco: St. Paul's Parish, 1980. Publisher, 221 Valley St., San Francisco, 94113.
- Mack, Gerstle. *Surviving the Great Earthquake and Fire*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1981. Publisher, 870 Market, Suite 915, San Francisco, 94102. \$5.95 (paper).
- Mueller, Kimberly. *California Museum Directory: A Guide to Museums, Zoos, Botanic Gardens, and Similar Institutions in the Golden State*. Claremont: California Institute of Public Affairs, 1980. 167 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 10, Claremont, 91711.
- Narell, Irena. *Our City: The Jews of San Francisco*. San Diego: Howell-North Books, 1981. \$25.00.
- Navasky, Victor S. *Naming Names*. New York: Viking Press, 1981. 452 pp. \$15.95.
- Nelson-Rees, Walter A. *Lillie May Nicholson, 1884-1964: An Artist Rediscovered*. Oakland: Walter Nelson-Rees, 1981. 85 pp. Author, 6000 Contra Costa Rd., Oakland, 94618.
- Paffrath, James D. et al. *From the Ground Up: The Golden Anniversary Book of the Santa Paula Airport, Under the Auspices of the Santa Paula Open House Committee*. Thousand Oaks: Josten's American Yearbook Co., 1980. 160 pp. Screaming Eagle Aviation, 822 E. Santa Maria St., Santa Paula, 93060. \$22.95.
- Palmquist, Peter E. *Laurence & Houseworth/Thomas Houseworth & Co.: A Unique View of the West, 1860-1886*. Columbus, Ohio: National Stereoscopic Association, Inc., 1981. Publisher, P.O. Box 14801, Columbus, Ohio 43214. \$22.95.
- Powers, Bob. *Indian Country of the Tubatulabal*. Kernville: Bob Powers, 1981. Publisher, Box 204, Kernville, 93238. \$18.00.
- Prokucek, Milan. *Manka's Czech Cookbook and Memoirs. My Own Story and How My Mother Cooked in Prague and How We Cook Now in Inverness California*. In collaboration with Barbara Gunn. Inverness: Author, 1980. 200 pp. Author, Callendar Way and Argyle, Inverness 94937. \$9.95.
- Quinn, Arthur. *Broken Shore: The Marin Peninsula, a Perspective on California History*. Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1981. \$12.95.
- Read, Ethel Matson. *Lo, the poor Indian. A Saga of the Suisun Indians of California*. Fresno: Panorama West Books, 1980. 590 pp. Publisher, Box 4647, Fresno, 93744. \$18.00 (cloth); \$10.00 (paper).



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- Reston, James, Jr. *Our Father Who Art in Hell: The Life and Death of Jim Jones*. New York: Times Books, 1981. \$14.95.
- Riggs, Susan F. *A Catalogue of the John Steinbeck Collection at Stanford University*. Stanford: Stanford University Libraries, 1980. 216 pp. Publisher, Green Library, Stanford University, Stanford, 94305. \$20.00.
- Rolfe, Lionel. *Literary L.A.* San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1981. Publisher, 870 Market, Suite 915, San Francisco, 94102. \$5.95 (paper).
- Rosenbaum, Fred. *Architects of Reform: Congregation and Community Leadership Emanu-El of San Francisco, 1849-1980*. Berkeley: Magnes Museum, 1980. Publisher, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, 94705. \$19.95 (cloth); \$9.95 (paper).
- Rowers, Barbara. *Grace Slick: The Biography*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980.
- Rowland, Leon. *Santa Cruz: The Early Years*. Santa Cruz: Paper Vision Press, 1980. 273 pp. Publisher, 1111 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, 95060. \$7.95 (paper).
- Rowntree, Lester. *Hardy Californians*. Reprint. Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith, Inc. 356 pp. \$8.95 (paper).
- Ryan, Frances B. and Lewis C. *Escondido As It Was 1900-1950*. Escondido: Frances B. & Lewis C. Ryan, 1980. 176 pp. Author, 3249 E. Valley Parkway, Escondido, 92027. \$25.00.
- Sargent, Shirley. *Seeking the Elephant, 1849: James Mason Hutchings' Journal of His Overland Trek to California*. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1981. Publisher, P.O. Box 230, Glendale, 91209. \$30.00.
- Saul, Eric and Don DeNevi. *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906*. Millbrae: Celestial Arts, 1981. \$25.00.
- Schatz, Thomas. *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Film-making, and the Studio System*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981. \$19.95.
- Schwartz, Ted. *The Hillside Strangler: A Murderer's Mind*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1981. \$12.95.
- Simmons, Marc and Frank Turley. *Southwestern Colonial Ironwork: The Spanish Blacksmithing Tradition from Texas to California*. Santa Fe, NM: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1981. 216 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 2087S, Santa Fe, 87503. \$25.95 (cloth); \$14.95 (paper).
- Sleeper, Jim. *Great Movies Shot in Orange County*. Trabuco Canyon: California Classics, 1980. 208 pp. Publisher, Box 291, Trabuco Canyon, 92678. \$15.00.
- Small Museums of the West*. San Francisco: California Living, 1981. Publisher, Hearst Bldg, Suite 223, Third and Market, San Francisco, 94103. \$9.95 (paper).
- Smith, Hedrick, Adam Clymer, Leonard Silk, Robert Lindsey and Richard Burt. *Reagan: The Man, the President*. New York: Macmillan, 1981. 186 pp. \$9.95.
- Smith, Murphy D. *Sherman Day: Artist, Forty-niner, Engineer*. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Blazier, Inc. 1980. 127 pp. Publisher, 1210A King St., Wilmington, Delaware 19801.
- Spiegel, Janet. *Stretching the Food Dollar*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1981. Publisher, 870 Market, Suite 915, San Francisco, 94102. \$4.95 (paper).
- Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*. 1973. Reprint. Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1981. \$9.95 (paper).
- Stephenson, Terry E. *Shadows of Old Saddleback*. Trabuco Canyon: California Classics, 1980. 206 pp. Publisher, Box 291, Trabuco Canyon, 92678. \$15.00.
- Stokell, Marjorie. *A Visitor's Guide to L.A.: How to Spend One to Fourteen Perfect Days in and Around the City of Angels*. San Francisco: California Living, 1981. Publisher, Hearst Bldg., Suite 223, Third and Market, San Francisco, 94103. \$6.95 (paper).
- Suzuki, Lester E. *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II*. Berkeley: Yardbird Publishing, 1979. 384 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 2370, Station A, Berkeley, 94702. \$10.50.
- Swindell, Larry. *The Last Hero; a Biography of Gary Cooper*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980.
- Tales of the Paradise Ridge*. Paradise: Paradise Fact & Folklore, Inc., June and December each year. Purchase through Ruth Lewis, 3405 Neal Rd., Paradise, 95969. \$2.25.
- Traisman, Barbara. *Handed Down: The Artisan Tradition*. San Francisco: Carolyn Bean Publishers, Ltd., 1980. 83 pp. Publisher, 120 Second St., San Francisco, 94105.
- Trzyna, Thaddeus C. *The California Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Sources of Current Information and Action*. Fourth edition. Claremont: California Institute of Public Affairs, 1981. Publisher, P.O. Box 10, Claremont, 91711. \$20.00.

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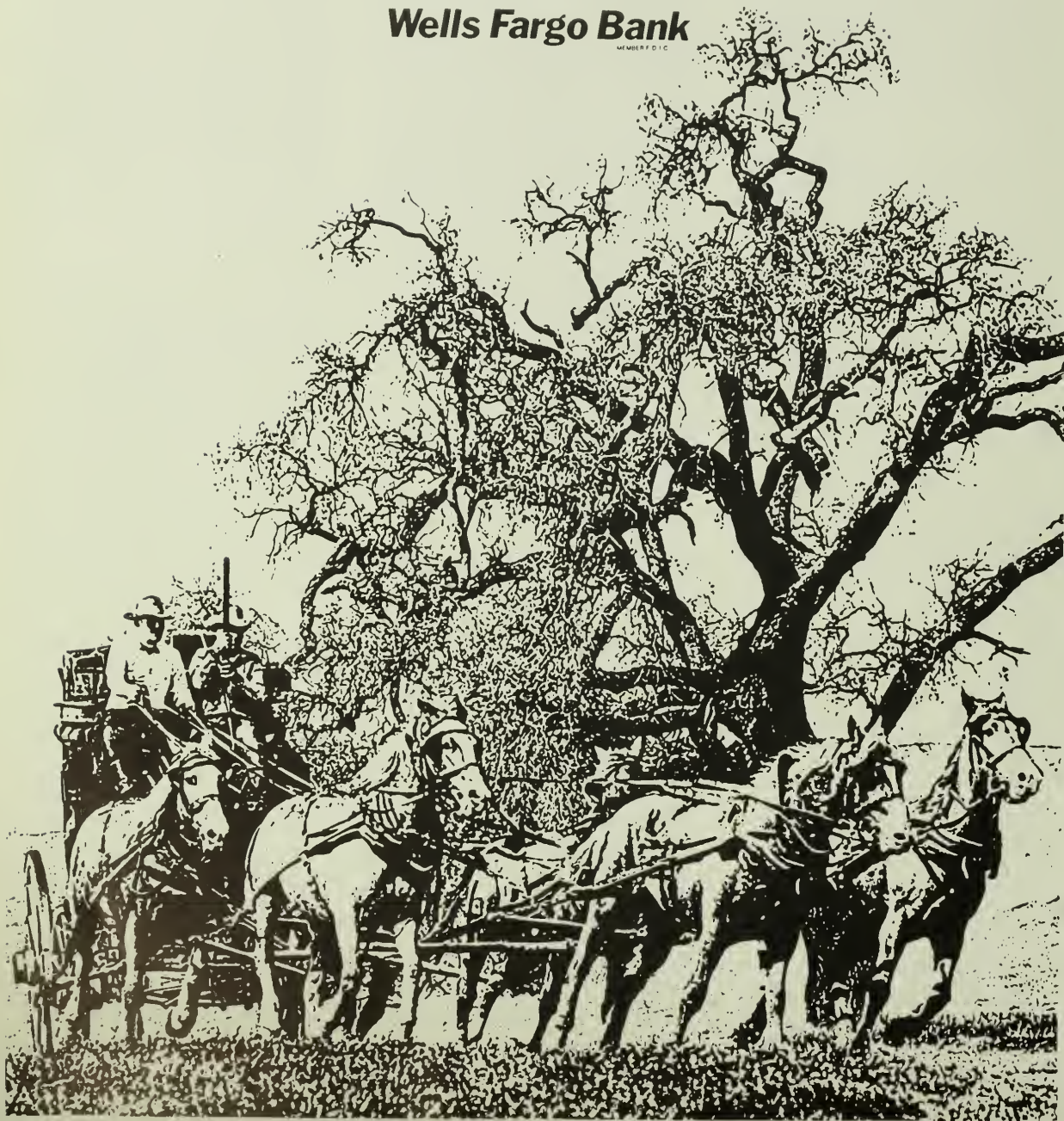
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# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

fall 1981



THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, founded in 1871, preserves historical materials and facilitates their use by everyone interested in California's heritage. The Society's publications, programs, and library services seek to stimulate interest in and achieve a wider appreciation and knowledge of the historical events and ideas that continue to shape life in California today. Membership is open to all.

Published by the Society since 1922, *California History* magazine investigates the state's history from pre-Columbian to modern times. Illustrated articles, pictorial essays, and book reviews encourage examination of the ongoing historical dialogue between the past and present.

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#### CALIFORNIA HISTORY

Published quarterly: ©1981 by CHS  
Annual membership \$25.00  
Student membership \$15.00  
\$10.00 of each CHS membership is designated for subscription to *California History*

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P.O. Box 3370  
San Diego, California 92103  
(714) 268-8334

Articles for publication, books for review and editorial correspondence should be sent to the Managing Editor, P.O. Box 3370, San Diego, CA 92103. Manuscripts should be typed, double spaced, with notes on separate sheets, and submitted in duplicate with a stamped and addressed return envelope. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of the authors.

LC 75-640289

ISSN 0612-2897

Second-class postage paid at  
San Francisco, California and additional  
mailing offices.  
Publication number 084180

#### COVER

Young children picking grapes in the vineyards outside of Fresno (c. 1919) as photographed by Claude C. "Pop" Laval. Devoting over fifty years to his craft, Laval left a remarkable pictorial record of life in and around the San Joaquin Valley. The story of this California photographer begins on page 244.

# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

PUBLISHED SINCE 1922

VOLUME LX FALL 1981 NO. 3

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Maritime Fiasco on the Northern California Coast 210

by LYNWOOD CARRANCO

Science and Caltech in the Turbulent Thirties 228

by JUDITH GOODSTEIN

"Pop Laval: San Joaquin Valley Photographer 244

by RICHARD STEVEN STREET

James vs. Marinship:  
Trouble on the New Black Frontier 262

by CHARLES WOLLENBERG

Edward D. Baker and  
California's First Republican Campaign 280

by RAY R. ALBIN

## REVIEWS

Portrait of the Golden State—  
The California State Library's Photography Collection 290

by GARY F. KURUTZ

Book Reviews 296

California Check List 300



## Maritime Fiasco on the Northern



*The U.S.S. Milwaukee ran aground January 13, 1917 at 4:10 a.m. when it attempted to pull the submarine H-3 from the Samoa beach.*

# California Coast



The Northern California coast, often called the "graveyard of the Pacific," has always been a dangerous one. From October through March, the southern storms, which originate in Alaskan waters, strike the coast with tremendous fury. Gale chases gale, lashing the coast with pounding and slashing combers.

One of the most spectacular ship disasters on the Pacific Coast occurred on the Humboldt Peninsula, opposite the city of Eureka, in the early morning of January 13, 1917. The cruiser *USS Milwaukee* ran aground when Captain F. W. Newton attempted to pull the submarine *H-3* from the Samoa beach. Before the *USS H-3* went aground, twenty-seven vessels had, in the preceding years, gone ashore in the area, many with loss of life. Because of the treacherous waters, the U.S. Government, in 1879, had established the U.S. Lifesaving Service Rescue Station at the southern end of the peninsula near the Humboldt Bay bar. Later in 1936 the Humboldt Bay Coast Guard Station was built on the same location.

On December 13, 1916, the Eureka Chamber of Commerce received a message from the government radio station at Table Bluff that the *USS Cheyenne*, commanded by Commander W.B. Howe, and the submarines *H-1*, *H-2*, and *H-3* would be off the Humboldt bar the next morning: "The second submarine division fleet will be off Humboldt bar about 8 a.m., Thursday December 14 for the purpose of getting information regarding facilities for caring for submarines. Would appreciate any help you can give us. Howe"<sup>1</sup>

The monitor *Cheyenne*, accompanied by the *H-1*,

Lynwood Carranco has published some twenty-one articles in professional journals on language, history and folklore and serves on the advisory board of *Journal of the West*. His books include *The Redwood Country: History, Language and Folklore* (Kendall/Hunt), *Logging the Redwoods* (Caxton Press) and *Genocide and Vendetta: The Round Valley Wars of Northern California* (University of Oklahoma Press).

*The submarine H-3 went aground on December 14, 1916 on the Samoa beach. This photograph was taken after the twenty-seven men were taken ashore.*



*H-2*, and *H-3*, had left Bremerton and was cruising down the coast, having stopped at Grays Harbor, the Columbia River, and at Coos Bay.<sup>2</sup>

The cruise was supposedly to gather information about facilities at coast ports for the care of submarine vessels. The Eureka Chamber made arrangements with Captain Petterson of the tug *Relief* to meet the submarine fleet off the bar and to pilot the ships in, bar conditions permitting.<sup>3</sup>

As the fleet neared the Humboldt Bay bar in rough seas and foggy weather, the *H-3*, according to one story, was temporarily disabled when a diesel failed to function. In those days the submarines had short conning towers which afforded little visibility, navigating equipment was crude, and radio direction finder stations on the Pacific Coast were few and far between. Lieutenant Harry Bogusch and Lieutenant E. F. Demke, because of the crippled engine, decided

to head into the calm waters of Humboldt Bay. As the *H-3* was slowly feeling her way along the foggy coast, Lieutenant Bogusch discovered that the diver was inside the first line of breakers. The one engine was not strong enough to move the sub back out, and soon the *H-3* with twenty-seven men was broadside in the breakers about three hundred yards offshore, pounding and rolling in the surf opposite the southern end of the Hammond Lumber Company town of Samoa. The date was December 14, 1916.<sup>4</sup>

About 8:30 a.m. three Samoa schoolboys on the school grounds thought that they saw a whale in the surf about a half mile south of the school. Pat Gallagher, Robert Hensel, and Curtis Peterson ran across the sand dunes to get a better look and discovered the *H-3* rolling in the breakers. The boys quickly informed their teachers, Nina Graham and



Esther Merkey, who checked and then sent the boys to notify Walter Pratt, the chief electrician for the Hammond Lumber Company.<sup>5</sup>

Walter Pratt immediately phoned the authorities in Eureka. About the same time the Table Bluff Wireless Station picked up the first message from the *H-3* to the *Cheyenne* which was twenty miles offshore. The *Cheyenne* could not communicate with the *H-3* and asked the Table Bluff Station to send out a tug and a Coast Guard boat. The tug *Relief*, the Coast Guard boat, and the monitor *Cheyenne* raced to the area of the wreck, but nothing could be done. The *H-3* was lying in a heavy surf about two hundred yards offshore, and the breakers made it impossible for the vessels to get within safe distance to render assistance.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile residents of Samoa soon appeared on the scene, and an occasional burst of the diver's whistle revealed that someone was calling for assistance. By that afternoon several thousand people from Eureka and the surrounding towns had gathered on the beach to observe the beached sub and to offer any help that was needed.<sup>7</sup>

The crew from the lifesaving station arrived on the beach about 12 p.m. with lifesaving equipment. The crew shot two lines across the sub, but none of the crew appeared on the battered deck of the diver which was rolling from side to side in the heavy surf. About 1:45 p.m. one of the diver's crewmen came out on deck and made a desperate attempt to make fast the line which the Coast Guard crew had shot aboard, but he was unsuccessful.<sup>8</sup>

When Commander Howe of the *Cheyenne* saw that he could not help the *H-3* from the sea, he headed for the bay to offer assistance. The *Cheyenne* crossed the bar at 1:45 p.m. and anchored off Quarantine (south of Samoa near Fairhaven) while the crew put ashore in small boats. By 2:15 p.m. Howe and his crew were on the scene of the wreck. The other two sub-

marines, the *H-1* and *H-2*, found it too difficult to cross the treacherous bar, and Howe gave them permission to proceed to San Francisco.<sup>9</sup>

Four or five crewmen came out of the diver about 2:30 p.m. to cut away the superstructure with an ax, but they finally gave up as the breakers washed over the rolling *H-3*. As the seas began to moderate, a crewman came out on deck and signalled ashore with the aid of flags that all were alive although two men had sustained injuries.<sup>10</sup>

The arrival of Captain Lawrence Ellison with a lifeboat, about 3:30 p.m., relieved the tense situation. When Captain Ellison had received the distress call, he and his crew had put out to sea to help. Seeing that nothing could be done, he had returned and with his crew had hauled the lifeboat up the beach from the station.<sup>11</sup>

When the lifeboat was not launched immediately because of the dangerous surf, aggressive Commander Howe became angry and asked the cautious Captain Ellison, who had experienced the dangerous waters, why an effort was not made to send the boat through the churning surf. After a heated exchange of words, Captain Ellison and his eight-man crew succeeded in launching the boat through the rough surf and moving close to the lee of the rolling *H-3*. Werner Sweins, one of the crew, leaped on board the sub, but a huge wave swept him off. The strong, agile sailor grasped a line and pulled himself aboard; again he was washed off but managed to cling to a rope. He finally reached the deck and kicked the conning tower to let the diver crew know of his presence.<sup>12</sup>

Although considerable time was required for the Coast Guard crew to rig the gear on the sub for a breeches buoy because of the rolling diver and the rough surf, the breeches buoy was rigged by 4:45 p.m., and J. J. Burns, gunner's mate first class, was the first man to be hauled ashore. The two ropes

*"The ship and her equipment were valued at \$7,000,000. .*

ashore for pulling the buoy each way were eagerly manned by citizens and members of the *Cheyenne's* crew. Each man when pulled across was submerged in the icy surf before coming to shore in the cold wind. Finally by 6:05 p.m. Lieutenant Bogusch, Captain of the *H-3* and the last man to leave, stepped on to the Samoa beach.<sup>13</sup>

As the battered, half-conscious twenty-seven men reached the beach, they were picked up and carried to a camp built on the sands by the hospital corps formed by Lieutenant A. B. Adams and Doctor Carl Wallace of the local Fifth Division Naval Militia. Their wet clothing was removed, they were wrapped in warm blankets, and they were given a stimulant. I. H. Blabon had lost three fingers of his right hand, and J. M. Anderson had a badly crushed hand. Both injuries had occurred during the forenoon when the two men had attempted to lift the hatch on the conning tower. The members of the crew were then taken to the homes of W. W. Peed, A. C. Charters, and others in Samoa where they spent the night.<sup>14</sup>

Although Commander Howe believed that the *H-3* could be pulled from the Samoa beach, the local waterfront men expressed their opinion that the sub could not be saved because the surf conditions differed greatly from those of southern California. Commander Howe, who had wired his superiors at Mare Island that "the Coast Guard service was very poor," was ordered to take command of salvage operations, placing Captain Ellison under him. Howe's comment on the beaching of the diver was that "the fog was heavy, and I suppose the fog hampered the operations of the *H-3* also; I believe Lieutenant Bogusch had no idea he was near shore."<sup>15</sup>

A short time before the beaching of the *H-3*, the destroyers and submarines of the Pacific Fleet had been combined in a task command called the Coast Torpedo Force under a single Force Commander, who was also commanding officer of the Force Flag-

ship and tender, the first class seven-million-dollar *Milwaukee* of 10,000 tons. The *Milwaukee* was then at Mare Island, getting an overhaul which included the installation of heavy machine tools, fitting her as a tender with ship equipment capable of all routine repairs to the coast torpedo vessels short of a major navy yard overhaul. At this time the Force Commander had been detached because of the cruiser's long stay at the navy yard, and the senior officer, Lieutenant F. W. Newton, who had had only ten years' experience in submarines, was in temporary command as Captain.<sup>16</sup>

The *H-3* had run aground at the Samoa beach before the new Force Commander arrived from the East Coast. At this time Lieutenant Harvey Haislip, who was in command of a destroyer lying in reserve at Mare Island and who was to play a major part in the futile salvaging of the *H-3*, was ordered aboard the tug *Iroquois* to go with Captain Newton to Eureka to pull the stranded sub. The monitor *Cheyenne* and the Coast Guard cutter *McCullough* would be standing by to assist in salvage operations.<sup>17</sup>

Although a seagoing tug, the *Iroquois* was not equipped for salvage operations, and the navy men were not experienced in salvage work. The *Iroquois* arrived Saturday morning, December 16, and Captain Newton established communications with Lieutenant Bogusch of the *H-3* who had made a camp on the sand near the diver which was now high and dry at low tide.<sup>18</sup>

Before the *Iroquois* arrived, the Coast Guard cutter *McCullough*, which had arrived opposite the sub the day before, had launched a boat as close to the breakers as possible, and a line attached to a buoy had been put in the water but had failed to drift to shore. The next day, Saturday, the *Iroquois* and the *McCullough* made unsuccessful attempts to float a line to the shore. In the afternoon at 2:45 p.m., Commander



*The H-3 at low tide on December 15. The disabled submarine attracted huge crowds to the peninsula. The H-3 and the Milwaukee (below) after the futile attempt to pull the beached submarine.*







Tour of inspection, January 19, 1917.  
From left to right: Commander W. B. Howe, Commander C. F. Preston, Admiral W. B. Caperton and Surgeon W. B. Steadman.

Howe, taking Captain Ellison and his crew, steamed from anchorage in the bay and joined the two ships opposite the *H-3*. Howe directed Ellison and his crew to take a line in to shore from the *Cheyenne*, but the line slipped from the surfboat.<sup>19</sup> On the following day, under a heavy blanket of fog, the monitor *Cheyenne* tried unsuccessfully to float lines ashore while three thousand people watched.<sup>20</sup>

On Monday, December 18, Lieutenant Bogusch, skipper of the *H-3*, borrowed a surfboat from the Lifesaving crew and with a volunteer crew brought out a light line through the hazardous surf to the tug *Iroquois*. Gradually the size of the thin rope was increased to a ten-inch hawser which was secured to the monitor *Cheyenne*. At the next high tide, on Tuesday, December 19, with the *Iroquois* towing in tandem ahead of the *Cheyenne*, the first pull began, the hawser grew taut, and the propellers of the two ships churned up great whirlpools of water. Under the pull the *H-3* swiveled a little in the sand until she was headed more directly out to sea. But that was all. After more pulling the 10-inch Manila rope parted between the sub and the *Cheyenne*.<sup>21</sup>

On the following day, Wednesday, December 20, rain, fog, and a heavy surf hampered operations. Storm warnings were flying, and salvage operations were suspended. The next day the salvage fleet headed for the smooth waters of Humboldt Bay to let the gale blow itself out. But the sea was piling up on

the entrance bar in great mountains of white water. Unwilling to risk another maritime disaster, all ships proceeded to San Francisco. Before the *Cheyenne* left, the tug *Relief* put Lieutenant Bogusch aboard. Ten men remained on the beach to guard the *H-3*.<sup>22</sup>

In the meantime the Navy Department sent Captain Whitelaw to Eureka to look over the situation. His comments were the following: "Relaunching the *H-3* with the present conditions of the surf is very uncertain and extremely difficult, but to haul the diver over the beach would cost . . . about \$75,000 or more. The *H-3* is damaged to the extent of \$4,000." As to the continuing dissension between Captain Ellison of the Coast Guard and the naval officers, his remarks were that "Ellison deserves the highest praise and commendation rather than criticism for the investigation of his conduct."<sup>23</sup>

When the ships returned to Mare Island, the Commandant of the Navy Yard, upon whom responsibility for salvage now fell, decided to turn the work over to civilian experts and called for bids to salvage the *H-3*. Two bids were received, one for \$150,000 from the largest marine salvage company on the coast and one for \$18,000 from the Mercer-Fraser Construction Company of Eureka. The first bid was considered too expensive, and the other was too little to be taken seriously.<sup>24</sup>

Not happy with the bids, Captain Newton decided to try again to salvage the *H-3*. This time, in addition

to the *Cheyenne* and the *Iroquois*, they would take the *Milwaukee* whose added 24,000 horsepower should be more than adequate to free the diver from the beach. Lieutenant Haislip, because of his previous experience, was ordered to go aboard the *Milwaukee* for temporary duty as the navigating officer.<sup>25</sup>

But first Captain Newton sent Lieutenant Bogusch to head the salvaging party from the beach. Bogusch arrived Thursday, January 4, 1917 with four skilled mechanics from Mare Island. A specially constructed nine-inch cable was to be used in pulling the *H-3*. The next day the salvage crew worked to connect the nine-inch steel hawser to the steel hull of the diver. Bogusch also supervised the construction of a wireless plant near the submarine to communicate with the *Cheyenne* and the *Milwaukee*. The *Milwaukee* arrived Sunday, January 7 to join the *Cheyenne*, which had arrived earlier, and anchored to seaward of the breakers abreast the *H-3*.<sup>26</sup>

Captain Newton, who had never commanded anything larger than a submarine, was nervous because a high surf was still running after the storm. The roar of the surf muffled conversation on the bridge, and great combers, pounding along the sandy bottom, created shock waves that could be felt through the ship's steel skin. The ship and her equipment were valued at \$7,000,000, a huge sum in 1916. But above the dollar value and service value were the lives of her nearly 450 men.<sup>27</sup>

Captain Newton, a small and energetic man, ordered Lieutenant Haislip to take a whaleboat and to plant two buoys about 500 yards apart, as close to the line of breakers as the boat could safely go. As reference marks, with a searchlight kept on them at night or in fog, the buoys would warn the Captain if the ship dragged shoreward. Haislip and a crew edged shoreward to plant the buoys, watching the huge humped backs crest and rush shoreward. The task completed, the whaleboat returned to the *Milwaukee*

where Haislip was told that he should have planted the buoys closer.<sup>28</sup>

Profiting from the difficulty experienced on the previous expedition in running a line from submarine to salvage ship, the *Iroquois* had towed a large steel barge from Mare Island which had been fitted with fin-like protuberances, which, it was hoped, would drive the barge into and through the surf, its bulk and weight sufficient to overcome the drag of the light line.<sup>29</sup>

But the surf was higher now than it had been when the previous attempt was abandoned. The officers ashore refused to push a surfboat into the surf. Captain Newton, his patience exhausted, decided to run a line from the ship, and on Wednesday, January 10, he ordered Lieutenant Haislip again to take a whaleboat and assemble a volunteer crew. While the executive officer was getting a crew together, Haislip looked for a good surfboat on board the *Milwaukee*. Not finding what he wanted, Haislip signalled the Coast Guard cutter *McCullough*, again at the scene, to borrow a Coast Guard boat. The reply was prompt and affirmative.<sup>30</sup>

A warrant officer with an efficient crew pulled the boat through rough water to the accommodation ladder. Noting their expertise, Captain Newton, hailing through a megaphone from the bridge, asked the warrant officer if he would run a line ashore. The answer was a blunt no, and the officer looked up at the Captain as if he were crazy. Then the Captain told the warrant officer to get his men out and that Haislip would take over. As the warrant officer was introduced to Haislip, he looked at him and said, "Don't be a fool. You can't run that surf . . . it's sure death."<sup>31</sup>

Haislip reported the Coast Guardsman's remarks to Captain Newton, but it had little effect. The Captain was determined to pull the *H-3* off, and it was now or never. The highest high water of the month

was only a few days off, the fog might set in, and another storm was about due. A line must be run and run now. The Captain told Haislip to test the surf. If he found it too big, he was to drop a special buoy inside the first line of breakers and to come back.<sup>32</sup>

With eight inexperienced men at the oars and a coxswain at the steering oar, Haislip headed for the breakers. Nearing the first line of breakers, Haislip swung the boat around and began to back in, keeping the stem headed straight to seaward, to better control the boat in the surf and to keep the light line to the *Milwaukee* paying out smoothly. When still not into the breakers, Haislip saw a long dark ridge looming up on the horizon. He gave orders at once to head seaward to meet what looked like a tidal wave. The *Cheyenne*, anchored seaward of the *Milwaukee*, caught the wave first, and seemed to rise skyward, showing her bottom, clear to the bilge keel. Next the *Milwaukee* went over the top, her propellers sticking clear out, her bilge keels showing for half the length of the ship. The ships had safely ridden the great roller before it crested, but the roller met the boat at the moment of cresting, a wall of water, concave in form, the leading edge reaching over Haislip and the crew. Then the roof caved in—oars and men went flying from the swamped boat. When the turmoil subsided, the men got back to the boat and started rowing again with the few oars they had found.<sup>33</sup>

A second huge comber followed the first, smashing the boat, sending it end over end—a cartwheel spewing out oars and men. Haislip was thrown clear from the boat but had the light line fouled around his arms and shoulder. Escaping from the line, he yelled to his men in the noisy surf to stay with the boat and not to attempt to try to swim ashore into the undertow. A few of the men had climbed back into the boat; others were clinging along the gunwales, arms hooked through the lifelines. The waves continued to batter the men in a Niagara of pounding water,

the boat rolling over and over and with fewer men clinging to it each time. Haislip, who was torn loose from the boat, struck out for the shore and then lost consciousness.<sup>34</sup>

When Haislip recovered consciousness, a few hours later in a nearby home in Samoa, he saw Harry Bogusch, skipper of the *H-3* and a former Naval Academy classmate, who congratulated him on “bringing home the bacon.” The capsized surfboat had washed ashore with the line still attached to it. Haislip learned that some of the men, including him, had been pulled out unconscious by the many men on shore who had formed a human chain into the rough surf when they spotted a swimmer or crewman floating in a life jacket. G. B. Roth, the coxswain, had suffered a broken shoulder. Crewman H.





## Maritime Fiasco

*Two views of the Milwaukee during salvage work.*



F. Parker had drowned, and his body washed ashore two days later near the north jetty.<sup>35</sup>

The line from the surfboat was used to haul a nine-inch hemp line, followed by a ten-inch hemp line out to the *Milwaukee*. At high tide the next day, the Manila lines were used to haul a five-inch and a six-inch steel line, fastened together and buoyed by log floats at intervals of ten feet. These steel lines were fastened securely to a towing tackle in the sub's bow, reinforced by wire straps around the hull. Meanwhile the *Milwaukee* had moved dangerously close just beyond the breakers to take the ends of the lines of 3,600 feet of steel cables. A line had been secured from the cruiser to the tug *Iroquois* farther out to sea for insurance against disaster.<sup>36</sup>

On Friday, January 12, on the second day ashore, Lieutenant Haislip, having recovered somewhat from his ordeal, went to the beach to look the situation over and found huge crowds on the beach who were alarmed for the cruiser's safety. Captain Ellison told him that the *Milwaukee* and the *Iroquois* had already taken one pull on the diver, moving it only a foot. The highest tide would come about 0300 the next morning, and he understood that Captain Newton was planning to try again. Ellison said that "This would be a disaster because the fog bank, hanging offshore, would move in. If the *Milwaukee* tried to pull in the darkness and fog, she would be set down by the strong southerly current and go ashore herself."<sup>37</sup>

The beach was crowded with spectators, not wanting to miss the final disaster. And if they should miss it, they had arranged to pass the word to all. Five blasts on the Hammond Lumber Company's steam whistle would announce that the *Milwaukee* was in the breakers. Great quantities of driftwood had been gathered and made into piles along the beach, ready to light as bonfires when the time came. The Mayor of Eureka and Captain Ellison urged

Haislip to warn Captain Newton. They felt that the *Milwaukee* was in grave danger.<sup>38</sup>

Captain Ellison then took Haislip and some of the crew members of the capsized surfboat across the bar and back to the *Milwaukee* in his powered boat. As they approached the cruiser, Haislip saw that the ship was a captive between an anchor that held her stem to seaward and a "dead man" in the sand, moored bow and stern with her stern less than four of her own lengths from the breaking surf. And offshore hung a thick bank of dirty grey fog, waiting patiently to smother the ships.<sup>39</sup>

Captain Newton grimaced and fidgeted as Haislip relayed the warnings of the people ashore, but no amount of urging to heed the advice would dissuade him. He was determined to take another pull at high water which would come at 3 a.m. the next morning. As the two men studied the chart together, their position was not reassuring. From their anchorage, the thirty-foot curve on the beach trended about SSW, so that if the *Milwaukee* dragged or drifted to the south—and there was reported to be a strong southerly set of current—she would soon touch bottom, for she drew more than twenty-two feet. Once the anchor was off the ground, the cruiser would swing at the end of about 3,000 feet of cable, anchored firmly to the *H-3*.<sup>40</sup>

The Captain told Haislip that the cruiser would not drift to the south because the *Iroquois* would have a line on the starboard bow, pulling northward to hold the *Milwaukee*'s head up and to keep her steaming straight to sea, and besides the *Cheyenne* would take a line from the *Milwaukee*'s stem and pull straight seaward, not only adding her 2,400 horsepower to the pull, but would, at the same time, help the *Iroquois* counteract any southerly set of current.<sup>41</sup>

Lieutenant Haislip had to check in at sick bay and was put on the sick list, thus relieving him of any responsibility that might develop. He was assigned to

"The eerie beam flitted across a maelstrom of white water. . . ."

a spare stateroom, well aft near the rudder post, over the propellers. And it was the churning of the propellers that awakened him later. The cruiser was pulling when a slight shudder ran through the ship: the rudder had touched bottom. Haislip, who had spent a restless night, left his bunk running. The bridge, except for a man at the wheel, was deserted; the engine telegraphs were set at STOP. The helmsman shouted to him that everyone had gone aft to get rid of the steel hawsers. And the compass showed that the *Milwaukee* had swung to port—to the south—the danger area. A dense fog hid the first line of breakers, but the threatening noise of the surf sounded very close.<sup>42</sup>

From the foremast, a searchlight probed the heavy fog. The eerie beam flitted across a maelstrom of white water, swung back, and held. It was the propeller wake of the *Iroquois* churning desperately to hold the cruiser's head up against the current. On her fantail, a cluster of men were anxiously watching the taut Manila line. The probing light caught the glint of ax blades. Haislip was to find out later that the hawser to the *Cheyenne* had parted earlier, leaving the tug *Iroquois* alone to help the cruiser. Commander Frank Bruce on the tug tried desperately to hold the cruiser's bow toward the sea, but the tug was too small with inadequate horsepower. Although the *Iroquois* was being forced to the shore by the steady pressure of the waves and tide, Bruce held on as long as he could. But when he saw the first line of breakers in the darkness, he cut the hawser to the *Milwaukee*. The weight of the 3,600 feet of steel cables and the heavy currents were too much for the cruiser, which began to drift ashore. The heavy cables, the big swells, and the strong currents finally forced the *Milwaukee* into the breakers, her bottom plates touching the sandy bottom from time to time with each heavy swell.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile the men worked desperately to cut the

lines, but the cruiser was trapped in the mechanism with which she had hoped to save the submarine. The strong current put such a strain on the towing cables that they could not be cleared. Soon about 4:10 a.m. (January 13, 1917) the *Milwaukee* was in twelve feet of water, broadside to the beach, and tilting at a twenty-degree list.<sup>44</sup>

Captain Newton radioed the other ships to stay clear, that the *Milwaukee* was in the breakers beyond help. The message was intercepted by the nearby Table Bluff Radio Station, and in turn was relayed to the Humboldt Bay Lifesaving Station on the peninsula. Soon after, five shrill blasts pierced the cold, foggy morning air, announcing to all that the *Milwaukee*, a seven-million-dollar, four-stack, first class cruiser, had come ashore to stay.<sup>45</sup>

The cruiser's bottom was bilged, her decks were buckling, and her boilers had shifted. All fires were extinguished. A helpless hulk she lay there, rolling in the sand, her crew in life jackets ready to abandon ship. Although many of the men were shaken in the rolling and lurching, only one man was injured.<sup>46</sup>

When daylight appeared, the seashore was wrapped in a dense blanket of fog. The people of the surrounding area had been aroused, and the beach was lined with hundreds of people who came to observe and to help in the rescue work. About 10 a.m. the heavy fog began to drift sulkily away, its work done. First the dim outlines of the phantom giant cruiser were visible, and gradually the definite lines of the ship could be observed. More than four hundred sailors and officers lined the decks of the cruiser.<sup>47</sup>

The men from the Lifesaving Station were on the scene and succeeded in shooting a line to the cruiser which was secured to the main mast. Captain Newton had sent for Haislip and told him—because of his previous contacts ashore and his knowledge of conditions on the beach—to make the first trip in the breeches and to take charge shoreside as his represen-





*The Mercer-Fraser Construction Company moving the H-3 across the peninsula to the bay.*

tative to arrange care for the men and other details, and to check on whether the breeches buoy was working properly.<sup>48</sup>

The *Milwaukee* was rolling, causing the line on which a breeches buoy was attached to go slack and then jerk taut. The first two passengers, Coxswain T. S. Decker and then Haislip, were jerked high in the air and then plunged into the surf. Even though the men ashore pulled as fast as they could, the men made most of the distance under water. But once the system was perfected, two men at a time were brought in.<sup>49</sup>

The system of the breeches buoy was too slow to bring in 450 men, so a boat had to be launched. Captain Ellison refused to launch a boat immediately in the dangerous surf, so Harry Bogusch, skipper of the *H-3*, borrowed the surfboat and asked for volunteers from the large number of men on shore. Many of the local citizens volunteered. Since there were more volunteers than needed, the surfboat that had capsized, still lying where it had been dragged up on the beach, was equipped and manned. Soon two surfboats were kept busy ferrying the Navy men to shore. Relief crews were used to keep the oarsmen fresh. Rescue operations went on all day while the surf kept moderating. By 8:30 p.m. when Captain

Newton came ashore in the last boat, he and those with him were not even splashed with spray.<sup>50</sup>

All of the survivors were taken care of that night in the bunkhouses of the Hammond Lumber Company, in the clubhouse of the Sequoia Yacht Club, and in nearby homes. But the next day, to keep the ship's company together and under control, arrangements were made to quarter the men temporarily at the New Era Park at Fairhaven. Three days later on January 17, two hundred and seventy men left on a special train for Mare Island, leaving a large crew to salvage the *Milwaukee*.<sup>51</sup>

The next day after the *Milwaukee* ran aground, five men under Yeoman First Class Frank Lavelle returned to the *Milwaukee* to remove \$128,000 which had been left on a big table in the officers' wardroom. The money was brought ashore without difficulty and taken to a bank in Eureka.<sup>52</sup>

The cruiser *San Diego*, flagship of the Pacific fleet, with Admiral William B. Caperton on board, arrived off the bar Tuesday, January 16 at 7:30 a.m. Captain Ellison, in the Coast Guard boat, accompanied by Captain Newton and Commander Howe went out to the cruiser and brought Admiral Caperton and four officers to Samoa, and they proceeded to the scene of the wrecked *Milwaukee*. After a preliminary inspec-

tion of the beached cruiser, Admiral Caperton, the highest Naval officer on the coast, and his staff went to the Vance Hotel in Eureka to investigate the causes which led to the stranding of the *Milwaukee* and to confer with local contractors on the possibility of salvaging the cruiser.<sup>53</sup>

In reviewing the maritime disaster of the *H-3* and the *Milwaukee*, Captain Henry Cousins, a local experienced seaman, organizer of the Humboldt Stevedore Company, and head of the Cousins Launch and Lighter Company, publicly stated that currents off the coast were not the cause of the wrecks:

The stranding of the sub was not due to current. She was lost in the fog and was looking for the mother ship *Cheyenne*. It is my belief that the sub's commander through a rift in the fog saw smoke of the Samoa mill and believed it to be the *Cheyenne* and headed his vessel for it with the result that he grounded.

The *Milwaukee* was simply driven ashore by the seas and the tide assisted strongly by the pull of the long heavy cable extended to the sub on the beach. If the cable was fastened so it could be cast off instead of having to be cut by hacksaws, using up valuable time, the cruiser easily could have freed herself from the pull, and the anchors would have held her.<sup>54</sup>

Naval Constructor D. C. Nutting arrived on January 17 from Mare Island to take charge of the salvage work on the *Milwaukee*. A building was built nearby for the Navy headquarters where sailors began to pack and to tag a large quantity of valuables. Tools, instruments, and supplies were placed in boxes and marked for shipment to Mare Island.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile the Navy had sent up a big donkey engine from Mare Island to attempt to recover the expensive 3,600 feet of submerged steel cable worth \$5,000, lying secure on the ocean floor. Lieutenant Demke, executive officer of the *H-3*, and a crew tried unsuccessfully for two weeks to drag the cable out of the ocean before abandoning the job. Walter S.

Selvage of the Selvage Construction Company of Eureka thought that he could salvage the cable and purchased it from the government for a "small price." Selvage brought his own smaller donkey across the peninsula and by pulling at right angles to the cable, contrary to what had been done by the Navy crew, he succeeded in recovering all of the cable which was disposed of later by Frank Breeden, well-known Eureka junk dealer.<sup>56</sup>

James Fraser of the Mercer-Fraser Construction Company of Eureka received word on January 17 that the government had accepted the company's bid of \$18,000 to salvage the *H-3* and that the contract became active immediately. A powerful donkey engine was shipped to the beach near the stranded *H-3*, and Fraser stated the following:

The sub would be first circled with steel cables and then connected to seven hydraulic jacks. An even pressure throughout the battery would raise the diver out of the sand; then the sub would be placed in a "crate" and moved across the peninsula on rollers, the work to be completed within ninety days.<sup>57</sup>

Admiral Fullam arrived on the flagship *Pueblo* on January 24 to investigate the grounding of the *H-3* and *Milwaukee*. There was much discussion in the local and state newspapers on who was responsible for the *Milwaukee*. Quoting the *Oakland Tribune*, the local *Humboldt Standard* stated the following:

The coast near Eureka is the most dangerous and treacherous along the entire Pacific Coast line but the federal government had done little toward making navigation in this section less perilous. It is the policy of the Navy to entrust important commands to officers of junior rank. The *Milwaukee* was under the command of a Lieutenant when it should be under a captain with active experience. There is a shortage of naval officers for increases to man new vessels. This is a grave menace. There is a lack of trained competent commanders. There is a policy of putting ships in reserve and reducing crews of others everytime a new



*Melvin Krei, editor of the Humboldt Bay Maritime Museum, poses with brass air-cooling coils taken from the hull of the Milwaukee. Below, Ray Glavich and Bill Zerlang, also from the Maritime Museum, look for artifacts in the remains of the Milwaukee (both photos, summer of 1980).*





warship is commissioned. The *Milwaukee* carried about a half crew rated for such a ship. The responsibility should be placed on a dreaming incompetent Secretary of the Navy.<sup>58</sup>

Investigation of the charges against Captain Lawrence Ellison of the local Coast Guard was begun January 23. Commander Howe had charged that Captain Ellison was incompetent and had refused to assist in launching a boat and that "Captain Ellison had refused to assist in the salvage work on the *H-3* following the stranding of that boat."<sup>59</sup>

The first step in starting salvage work on the beached *Milwaukee* began February 5 when the Northwestern Pacific began to construct a railroad from Samoa to the beach where the cruiser lay high and dry. The Navy's plan was to connect a trestle from the railroad spur at the water's edge to the side of the ship where a wharf would be built.<sup>60</sup> The Mercer-Fraser bid of \$9,000 was the only bid submitted on the trestle, and on February 15 construction began from the spur which was completed February 13. The 3,500-foot trestle was finished by March 2 and the wharf alongside the cruiser on March 14.<sup>61</sup> By March 9 a large bunkhouse was already completed for the officers and men who would be stationed on the beach, and workmen were employed to build a warehouse alongside the railroad for storing salvaged machinery.<sup>62</sup>

Work on the *H-3* began February 15, but storms and high tides greatly delayed salvage operations. A bulkhead of sheet piling was built on the sea side of the sub to aid the workers. On Tuesday, March 20, the *H-3* was raised, "daylight showing clear for more than a foot below the keel for its entire length." On March 30 the sub was moved 325 feet, sideways from the water line to a place high and dry on the sand and secure from the highest water, ready for "cradling."<sup>63</sup> Two days later two huge fir logs were placed on each side of the sub and lashed together,

holding her upright.<sup>64</sup> Timber balks were laid in a three-foot high wooden double track across the three-quarter-mile of sand spit.<sup>65</sup>

Another tragedy occurred on Monday, March 12, when William Donnelly, workman for the Mercer-Fraser Company, fell from the trestle while unloading planks from a truck. Although he was a good swimmer, he was carried to his death by the strong current in a rough surf.<sup>66</sup>

In the meantime salvage work progressed on the *Milwaukee*. A huge derrick was installed. Two of the motor dories on board were placed on cars and, with another sealed box car, were ready for shipment to Mare Island. On April 4, the Navy began to strip the *Milwaukee*.<sup>67</sup>

By April 7 a donkey had pulled the *H-3* half way across the peninsula over sand dunes and gullies. On Friday, April 20 at 11 a.m., in the presence of some one thousand people, the *H-3* was launched by a donkey engine near the site of the old Consumer's mill on Humboldt Bay, south of Samoa, just four months and five days following her stranding on the Samoa beach. The submarine disappeared from sight for a few seconds, then surfaced and was towed to a safe mooring.<sup>68</sup> After a cleaning out by the crew, tests were made to determine her seaworthiness. Then the *H-3* resumed her interrupted voyage to San Francisco in tow of the *Iroquois*, living, after an extensive overhaul, to fight in World War I.<sup>69</sup>

The local newspapers announced on March 20 that the Naval Board of Inquiry, called to investigate charges directed against the conduct of Captain Lawrence Ellison of the Coast Guard station during the beaching of the *H-3* and the *Milwaukee* on the Samoa beach, had exonerated Captain Ellison and his crew of all charges, and they were praised for their excellent work. Particular praise was given to Coast Guardsman Werner Sweins who displayed remarkable courage and great personal bravery in getting a

line aboard the stranded sub.<sup>70</sup> Another report, which could not be verified, was that a naval court had exonerated Lieutenant F. W. Newton of the *Milwaukee* and that Commander Howe of the *Cheyenne*, ranking officer at the time of the stranding of the *Milwaukee*, was "to lose several numbers in his grade."<sup>71</sup>

All that could be salvaged from the *Milwaukee* was taken to Mare Island by train. During the salvaging operations, there was much discussion on how to save the hull of the cruiser. One plan was to build a breakwater of rock to protect the ship and then to dig a canal across the peninsula to float the cruiser to the bay. Drilling operations were even made in the sand dunes to determine whether a canal could be dug.<sup>72</sup> Bids for salvaging the hull were under consideration in Washington, D.C., but nothing ever materialized. The once proud *Milwaukee*, a tourist attraction for many years, was gradually obliterated by the elements and professional and amateur shipwreckers. The final act occurred during World War II when parts of the cruiser were salvaged for scrap to help the war effort.

In 1977 an organization called the Humboldt Bay Maritime Museum Association was organized to preserve the local maritime heritage. In 1980 this active group erected a huge stone marker and plaque on the sand dunes near the highway and opposite the location of the once visible cruiser. The State of California has recognized the marker as a place of historic interest.

Every summer at minus tides, parts of the *Milwaukee's* hull can be seen sticking out of the sand. In July 1980, sixty-three years after the beaching of the cruiser, a strange incident occurred. A sandbar formed on the ocean side opposite the submerged hull, making a lagoon near the shore. A strong current dug a channel ten feet deep through the hull of the *Milwaukee*, and through a hatchway over the

engine room. And here members of the Maritime Association collected brass collars, a brass rib, brass valves, and oil-cooling coils of brass pipe for their newly acquired museum in Eureka.

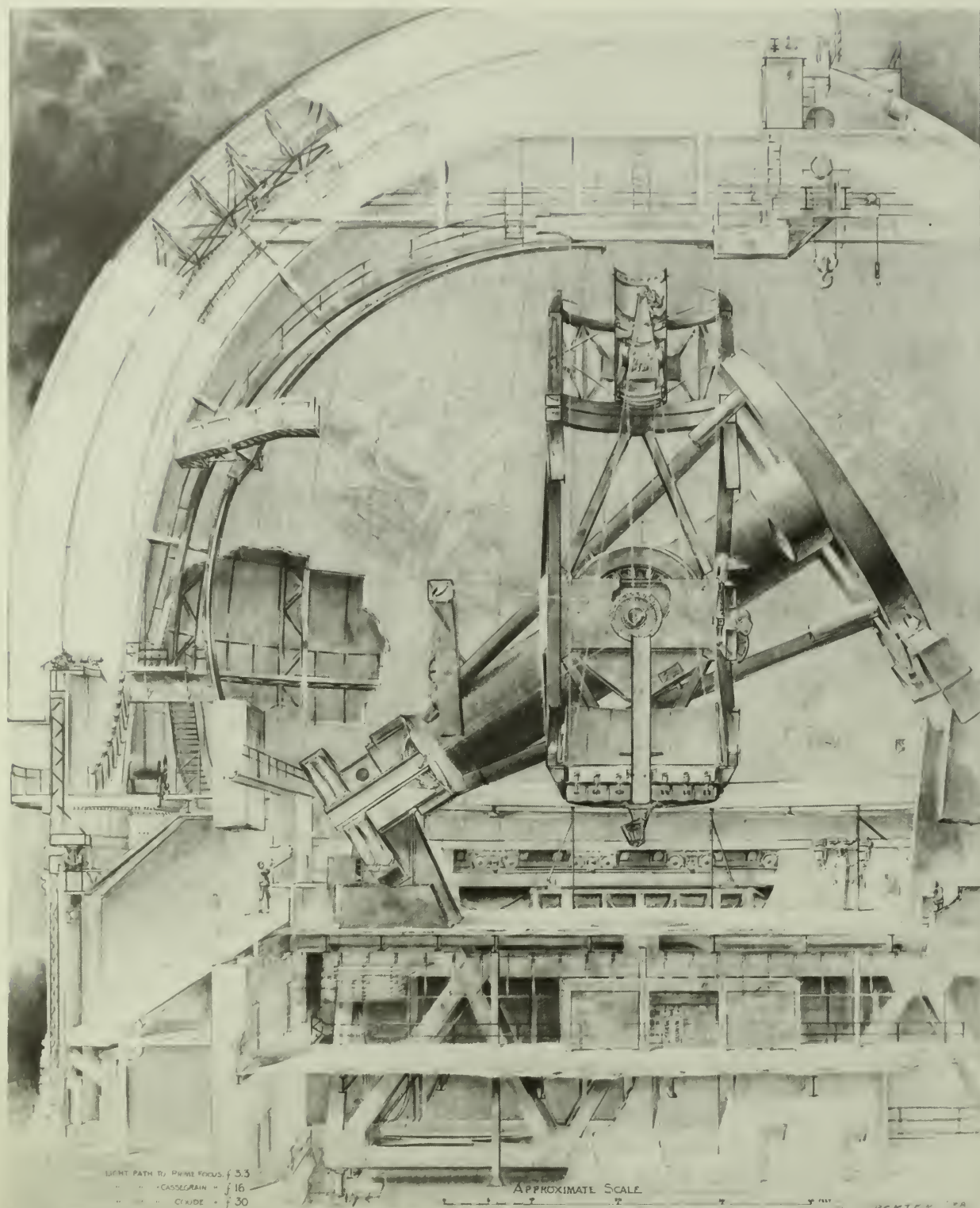
Photographs on pages 210, 211, 212, 215, 218 and 219 are courtesy of the Humboldt County Historical Society. Those on pages 216 and 222 are by Emma Freeman. The modern photographs on page 224 are courtesy of Melvin Krei.

## Notes

1. Eureka *Humboldt Standard*, December 13, 1916.
2. *Ibid.* The *H-3*, which was the latest type of sub that the United States had in commission, was 150 feet long and was built in 1914. It had five hatches, her draught was 14 feet, and her surface speed was 10-12 knots. On her trial run in San Diego, the *H-3* had buried her nose in the mud January, 1915 where she lay for 24 hours. In Bremerton, before heading south, the *H-3* had also had a "slight mishap." (Eureka *Humboldt Times*, December 15, 1916).
3. Eureka *Humboldt Times*, December 14, 1916.
4. Captain Harvey Haislip, USN (Ret.), "The Valor of Inexperience," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (February, 1967), 36. Captain Harvey Haislip, USN (Ret.) graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1911. He commanded the Northern California Sector Western Sea Frontier in 1943-1944 and was Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations) of the 12th Naval District in 1945. He was the author of four historical novels, and his play, "The Long Watch," was produced on Broadway. He also wrote the narration of the Byrd Expedition, "The Secret Land," which won an Academy Award for the best full length documentary movie.
5. Evelyn McCormick, "The *H-3* Submarine," *The Humboldt Historian*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (February-March, 1979), 5-6.
6. *Humboldt Times*, December 15, 1916; *Humboldt Standard*, December 14, 1916.
7. *Humboldt Times*, December 15, 1916.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Humboldt Standard*, December 14, 1916.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Humboldt Times*, December 15, 1916.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, December 15, 16, 1916.
16. Haislip, p. 37.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*; *Humboldt Times*, December 17, 1916.
20. *Humboldt Times*, December 18, 1916.
21. *Ibid.*, December 19, 1916; Haislip, p. 39.
22. Haislip, p. 39; *Humboldt Times*, December 22, 1916.
23. *Humboldt Times*, December 24, 1916.
24. Haislip, p. 39; *Humboldt Times*, December 30, 1916.
25. Haislip, p. 39.
26. *Humboldt Times*, January 5, 8, 1917.
27. Haislip, p. 40.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, p. 41-42.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 43-44. The local newspapers reported that the combers were from fifteen to twenty feet high.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 44; *Humboldt Times*, January 13, 1917.
36. *Humboldt Times*, January 10, 1917.
37. Haislip, p. 45.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47; *Humboldt Times*, January 14, 1917.
44. Haislip, p. 47; *Humboldt Times*, January 13, 1917.
45. Haislip, p. 48.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Humboldt Times*, January 14, 1917.
48. Haislip, p. 48.
49. *Ibid.*; *Humboldt Times*, January 14, 1917.
50. Haislip, p. 49. After three trips the first boat launched was put out of commission, and two men were slightly hurt when the boat hit some driftwood. Another boat was launched from the *Milwaukee*, and the work went on (*Humboldt Times*, January 14, 1917).
51. Haislip, p. 49.
52. Arthur L. Brickey, "The U.S.S. *Milwaukee* Story," Speech, Humboldt County Historical Society, April 17, 1963. Brickey was a crew member of the *Milwaukee* and one of the five men ordered to remove the money. The local *Humboldt Standard* reported that \$90,000 was on board the cruiser. On Sunday, January 14, 1917, it was estimated that between 6,000 and 7,000 people visited the Samoa beach. The launches from the Cogshall Launch and Towboat Company ferried people across the bay every fifteen minutes (*Humboldt Standard*, January 15, 1917).
53. *Humboldt Standard*, January 16, 1917.
54. *Ibid.*, January 17, 1917.
55. *Ibid.*, January 18, 24, 1917, March 2, 1917.
56. *Ibid.*, January 20, February 7, 13, March 8, 1917.
57. *Ibid.*, January 17, 1917.
58. *Ibid.*, January 22, 1917.
59. *Ibid.*, January 23, 1917.
60. *Ibid.*, February 6, 1917.
61. *Ibid.*, February 14, March 2, 1917.
62. *Ibid.*, March 9, 1917.
63. *Humboldt Times*, March 30, 1917.
64. *Ibid.*, April 2, 1917.
65. Haislip, p. 49.
66. *Humboldt Standard*, March 13, 1917.
67. *Humboldt Times*, April 2, April 4, 1917.
68. *Ibid.*, April 21, 1917.
69. Haislip, p. 49.
70. *Humboldt Times*, March 20, 1917.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Humboldt Standard*, February 13, 19, 1917.





# THE TWO HUNDRED INCH TELESCOPE

# Science and Caltech in the Turbulent Thirties

Caltech is a young school. Although its roots were planted by Amos G. Throop in 1891, the modern California Institute of Technology was born soon after the close of World War I. Between 1919 and 1921, the school obtained a handsome endowment, drafted a new educational philosophy, changed its name, and selected a new man to guide its destiny for the next twenty-five years.<sup>1</sup> In 1920, ten years after the school had moved from downtown Pasadena to its present location, the campus still had a new-born look. The population consisted of 9 graduate students, 359 undergraduates, and a faculty of 60.

By the early thirties, the face of the campus had begun to fill out. The number of new buildings had tripled. In addition to several additional units for physics, there were new laboratories for astrophysics, aeronautics, and nuclear physics. The machine shop for a 200-inch telescope project was completed and working; the optical shop was awaiting the arrival of the 200-inch disk. There were dormitories for the undergraduates and a faculty club for the staff. The campus population had climbed to 138 graduate students (fifteen times as many as ten years before), 510 undergraduates, and a faculty of 180.

The numbers themselves only tell part of the story. So far as the undergraduate enrollment was concerned, the trustees, in 1921, had limited the freshman class to 160 students. During the thirties, the freshman class never exceeded this number. By the end of the decade, the undergraduate population stood at 606.<sup>2</sup>

There was no official ceiling on the number of graduate students admitted to Caltech during the thirties and before. The school initially offered graduate work leading to a doctorate in physics, chemistry, and engineering. Physics was king from the very beginning. It had more students, more faculty, and more money. Geology joined the list of graduate studies in 1925, aeronautics in 1926; biology and mathematics in 1928. Physics still had more students and faculty, and this is the way it stayed throughout the thirties. Robert A. Millikan, the head of the physics department, was also head of the school. In 1932 the physics staff included a visiting physicist from Berlin, Albert Einstein, and J. Robert Oppenheimer, a recent addition to the faculty.

Physics was Robert Millikan's world. In his memoirs, Millikan described how he became interested in it. At the end of his sophomore year at Oberlin, his Greek professor asked him to teach the elementary physics course the following year. When Millikan replied that he didn't know any physics, his professor's answer was, "Anyone who can do well in my Greek can teach physics."<sup>3</sup>

Millikan was fifty-three when he came to Caltech

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in 1921. By then, he had piled up an impressive track record as an experimentalist. Behind him lay the measurement of the charge on the electron, the verification of Einstein's photoelectric equations, and the numerical determination of Planck's constant. He drove a hard bargain with Caltech's presidential search committee, which consisted of astronomer George Ellery Hale and chemist Arthur Amos Noyes. Hale and Noyes wanted to use Caltech to reshape the education of scientists; Millikan wanted, in his own words, "to put physics on the map" in southern California.<sup>4</sup> To do that, he needed research funds. The three men came to an agreement. Hale and Noyes promised Millikan the lion's share of the school's financial resources and minimal administrative duties as head of the Institute. In

return, Millikan agreed to come, as director of the Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics, and chairman of the executive council of the Institute. (Strictly speaking, Millikan never served as president.)

The negotiations with Millikan did not affect Hale directly. Hale neither taught nor had graduate students at Caltech. As director of the Mt. Wilson observatory, his research funds were provided by the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Noyes, on the other hand, gave up his promised share of Institute funds with which to expand the chemistry division. A physical chemist primarily, Noyes adored three things: chemistry, his beach house at Corona del Mar, and touring cars. His 1917 Cadillac was named by his students, "Old Mossie," after Demosthenes,







*The only known photograph ever taken of the three men on the Caltech campus: R.A. Millikan (right), G. E. Hale (center) and A. A. Noyes. A campus was christened them "thinker, tinker and stinker."*

OPPOSITE: An aerial view of the 1922 campus. It consisted of 22 acres and four permanent buildings: Throop Hall, for engineering; Gates (left) for chemistry; East Bridge (right) for physics; and Culbertson (foreground) for an auditorium.

*The 30-acre Caltech campus, c. 1933, reflects the plans drawn up by Bertram B. Goodhue in 1920.*





in honor of its chronic stutter. Old Mossie was believed by Noyes's students "to hold the world's record for the standing broad jump because Noyes would so often absent-mindedly try to start off in high gear."<sup>5</sup>

Physics, in any event, grew at the expense of chemistry and engineering during the twenties. Millikan initiated a visiting scholars program shortly after his arrival in Pasadena. The list of scientists who accepted Millikan's invitation represented the cream of European physics, including Bohr, Dirac, Ehrenfest, Lorentz, and Sommerfeld. Albert Einstein's visits to the campus in 1931, 1932, and 1933 capped Millikan's campaign to make Caltech one of the physics capitals of the world. If nothing else, Einstein's visits made the point most dramatically that the Caltech Hale, Noyes, and Millikan had set out to build in the twenties had come of age in the thirties.

Millikan liked to say that even if Einstein had never published a word on relativity, his other theoretical researches would have won him an enduring place in the history of ideas. But, it was, in

fact, the cosmological implications growing out of the theory of relativity that brought Einstein to the campus. Einstein had spent eight years transforming his ideas on the electrodynamics of moving bodies into the more comprehensive general theory of relativity. He began toying with the problem of incorporating gravitation into the special theory in 1907, and in 1916 published the fundamental paper on the theory of general relativity — which made a number of predictions. In 1919, two astronomical expeditions independently detected the bending of a ray of light in the vicinity of the sun during an eclipse. The confirmation of this particular prediction, almost single-handedly, turned Einstein, the theoretical physicist, into a twentieth century folk hero.<sup>6</sup>

Einstein came to California in the early thirties specifically to consult with scientists at the California Institute of Technology. Few members of the general public understood the nature of his visits, but they idolized him all the same. His reception in California was one part show business, one part hero worship, and one part genuine affection.

Will Rogers, the noted humorist, described the



*Noyes at the wheel of "Old Mossie," his early vintage Cadillac, with other members of the chemistry faculty, 1917.*

whole sideshow when he said, just after Einstein returned to Berlin in March of 1931:

The radios, the banquet tables and the weeklies will never be the same. He came here for a rest and seclusion. He ate with everybody, talked with everybody, posed for everybody that had any film left, attended every luncheon, every dinner, every movie opening, every marriage and two-thirds of the divorces. In fact, he made himself such a good fellow that nobody had the nerve to ask him what his theory was.<sup>7</sup>

"What his theory was," was the prime reason for his visits, however. As early as 1913, Einstein had begun looking for experimental verification for the correctness of his theory of general relativity. He wrote to Hale from Zurich, asking him to make an astronomical measurement.<sup>8</sup> He was anxious to know if Hale could detect the influence of the sun's gravitation field upon a light ray. Hale replied that in order to try he needed a solar eclipse. The experiment was finally carried out in 1919 by two British expedition teams and again in 1922 by an American team of astronomers—and it did confirm the theory of general relativity. The cosmological implications of Einstein's general theory attracted a lot of attention in the 1920s and 1930s, especially at Caltech.

Richard Tolman, at the time, was Caltech's relativity expert. Tolman's scientific interests were varied, but the main thrust of his work at the Institute included statistical mechanics, relativistic thermodynamics, and cosmology. He had come to Caltech in 1922. Seven years later, the Mt. Wilson astronomer, Edwin Hubble, made the discovery that redshifts are proportional to distance. Spurred on by Hubble's discovery, Tolman undertook a series of studies in the 1930s on the application of the general theory of relativity to the overall structure and evolution of the universe.

Hubble's discovery challenged Einstein's cosmological picture of a static universe. The big question at Caltech in 1931 was whether Einstein would give up his cosmological constant and accept the idea of a dynamical universe. Einstein discussed his theory and its interpretation at length with Tolman, Hubble, and the other scientists on the campus. While in Pasadena, he remained silent on the subject. But five months later, Einstein wrote to Millikan from Berlin that "further thought regarding Hubble's observations have proved that the phenomena adapts itself [sic] very well to the theory of relativity."<sup>9</sup> Within a matter of months, Einstein publicly adopted the expanding universe model.

While Einstein was a visitor in southern California, there were many dinners given in his honor. At one, Tolman served as toastmaster for the evening. The text of his remarks came to light several years ago, and it recaptures the atmosphere of Caltech fifty years ago. In his opening remarks, he said:

Fellow Scientists: First of all I should like to explain to you the reason why I happen to be toastmaster this evening. Three weeks ago today in the late afternoon I was strolling back and forth on the Institute Campus, buried in meditation, trying to find a solution for the terrible problem of the increase in entropy that appears to be taking place everywhere throughout the universe. Just at the moment when it seemed as if I were about to get a solution for the problem, my walk was suddenly interrupted by Dr. Millikan.

"Tolman," he said. "Yes, Professor Millikan," I replied — Dr. Millikan is an older man than I am and he always speaks to me in that informal way. He just calls me Tolman. But I am a younger man than he is, so I always reply, "Yes, Sir." "Yes, Professor Millikan."

"Tolman," he said, "I think it would be a good plan if we had a dinner at which the members of the scientific staff of the Institute and neighboring institutions could meet Professor Einstein." "Dr. Millikan," I replied, "I think that would be very fine for the staff members but



*Richard Chace Tolman held full professorships in physical chemistry and mathematical physics. During World War II he served as scientific advisor to General Groves on the Manhattan Project.*



pretty hard on Dr. Einstein. I am sure that in the course of his life he has had to attend so many dinners in his honour that he never wants to look another filet mignon in the face. I therefore recommend strongly *against* such a dinner."

Two weeks ago today, I was again strolling back and forth on the campus, and had again nearly reached a solution of the problem of entropy, and was again interrupted by Dr. Millikan. "Tolman," he said, "I have been thinking about *your* suggestion that we ought to have a staff dinner in honour of Dr. Einstein, and I believe we ought to have a number of speeches at the dinner by staff members." Dr. Millikan," I replied, "I think that would be fine for the speakers but very hard on Dr. Einstein and the other listeners. I therefore recommend strongly *against* any speeches."

One week ago today, I was again strolling back and forth on the campus, and had again nearly reached a solution of the problem of entropy, and was again interrupted by Dr. Millikan. "Tolman," he said, "I have been thinking about *your* suggestion that we ought to have speeches at the staff dinner in honour of Dr. Einstein. Here is the list of speakers and I have decided to appoint you the toastmaster."

That, Fellow Scientists, is the reason why I am

toastmaster tonight and the reason why the problem of the entropy of the universe still remains unsolved.<sup>10</sup>

In their spare time, the Einsteins did a little touring, visiting places like Santa Barbara and Palm Springs. The movie cameras, like the reporters, were never far away. Amateur and professional filmmakers alike tried to capture the private side of the man. Occasionally, the camera recorded Einstein doing what he liked to do best, physics. In one film, as the girls and boys crowd around him to have their picture taken, Einstein trains his eye on one particular head. The long curls on the girl's head are his undoing. He pulls one. "You see," he tells his admiring audience, "even pretty curls obey Hooke's Law."<sup>11</sup>

Charles Richter, Caltech professor emeritus of seismology, tells a marvelous story about Einstein. It concerns the Long Beach earthquake, which occurred in March 1933. Einstein and Beno Gutenberg, professor of geophysics, were walking just then towards the Athenaeum, talking mostly about Gutenberg's studies of earthquakes. The two scientists were so involved in their conversation, they

failed to notice that they were in the midst of one. When a colleague came up to them and asked, "Well, what do you think of the earthquake?" their response was, "What earthquake?"<sup>12</sup>

There was never any intention on Millikan's part of Einstein staying permanently at the Institute. There weren't any funds for a permanent position. Of course, Millikan used Einstein's visits for publicity purposes very effectively. He also went to great lengths to screen the Einsteins' social engagements. Millikan's greatest fear was that Einstein's public talks on non-scientific issues would cost the Institute needed donations. Einstein resented this, but took it in stride.<sup>13</sup>

An Einstein and Millikan story was told some years ago by Earnest Watson, another member of the Caltech faculty. At one of the many Athenaeum

dinners for Einstein, the woman who was sitting by his side kept pressing him to accept a dinner invitation. "Well," Einstein said, "I can't come at that time . . . [as] I've arranged to go up on Mt. Wilson." To which his dinner companion replied, "Perhaps it will rain; then you couldn't go to Mt. Wilson." Einstein smiled, "Oh no, it won't rain; Millikan has arranged it."<sup>14</sup>

Next to Einstein, Millikan during his lifetime was undoubtedly this country's most public figure in science. When Millikan spoke, the country listened.

How well informed the public was about Caltech in the thirties is indicated by a story about Millikan recently related by Carl Anderson, Nobel Laureate and Board of Trustees Professor of Physics Emeritus. Anderson, who discovered the positron in 1932 in the course of his cosmic ray researches,



*Three Nobel Laureates in front of the Athenaeum: A. A. Michelson (left), R. A. Millikan (right) and A. Einstein (center), 1931. Michelson, then 78, was gearing up for a new and refined measurement of the speed of light at the Irvine Ranch.*



*Russell W. Porter at his drawing board in Pasadena, c. 1935. Below is a Porter sketch made at Big Bear Lake in 1929. Big Bear Lake was one of many sites surveyed for the 200-inch telescope.*

*House at Big Bear Lake Region  
Late Investigation  
Altitude - 7500 ft.*







*Standing at the top of Mt. Wilson's solar telescope in January 1931 are: Walther Mayer (left) assistant to Albert Einstein (right) and Charles E. St. John (center) astrophysicist at Mt. Wilson.*

spent four years as a Caltech physics undergraduate, stayed on as a graduate student of Millikan's, and subsequently earned his Ph.D. at the Institute. Anderson was on a train going to a physics meeting, and he got into a conversation with another passenger in the club car. The fellow asked what he did. Anderson said he was a professor. He asked, "Where?" and Anderson said, "At Caltech." "Oh, is that part of UCLA or is it part of USC or what is Caltech?" "No, it's an independent college; it has nothing to do with SC or UCLA," replied Anderson. Then Millikan's name was mentioned and the fellow exclaimed, "Oh, you mean Millikan's school!"<sup>15</sup>

The focus of scientific research at the Institute under Millikan during the thirties ranged from drosophila genetics and the biochemistry of vitamins in biology, to the theory of turbulence and airplane wing design in aeronautics; from cancer therapy with radiation and the radioactivity of the light elements in nuclear physics, to soil erosion and the transmission of water from the Colorado River to Los Angeles in engineering; from the application of quantum mechanics to molecular structure in chemistry, to the introduction of the magnitude scale in seismology.

The Institute's project to build a 200-inch telescope was in a class by itself. The embryonic idea which grew into the world's largest telescope began shortly after the 100-inch telescope on Mt. Wilson went into operation. In 1919, astronomer Francis G. Pease used the new telescope to photograph the moon. Flushed with success, Pease and George E. Hale, the director of the Mt. Wilson Observatory, began to dream of a still larger telescope. Pease even designed a 300-inch reflecting telescope. When the editor of *Harper's Magazine* asked Hale, in 1927, to write a popular astronomy piece for its readers, Hale deliberately wrote an article on large telescopes.<sup>16</sup> Hale asked the editor at *Harper's* to send a pre-publication copy of "The Possibilities of Large Telescopes" to Wickliffe Rose at the Rockefeller Foundation. Then, Hale wrote to Rose. In his letter, he asked Rose if the Foundation would finance a study project to determine how large a telescope mirror it would be feasible to cast.<sup>17</sup> Rose invited Hale to come east for a talk. When Hale called on Rose in New York, in March 1928, Rose began the conversation by asking point blank, "Do you want a 200-inch or a 300-inch?"<sup>18</sup> Hale chose the 200-inch and immediately drafted a proposal; Millikan and Noyes approved it. Several months later, the Inter-

national Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation gave the green light to Hale's \$6,000,000 proposal.

In the fall of 1928, an Observatory Council, with Hale as chairman, was formed to direct the planning, construction, and operation of the 200-inch telescope. Hale personally assembled the team of scientists and engineers to create the world's largest telescope. He picked John Anderson, a Mt. Wilson astronomer as executive officer. Hale then sent Anderson and Pease to Springfield, Vermont, to talk to Russell W. Porter. Porter was an arctic explorer, artist, and telescope maker. He designed and built his own observatory and telescope and published many articles on the subject. Anderson and Pease came away from their meeting with Porter convinced he should be invited to join the telescope project. Several weeks later, Porter received a telegram from Hale, "Can you come to Pasadena for several months to assist in designing two hundred inch telescope and instrument shop auxiliary instruments?"<sup>19</sup>

The two months became two decades. Porter arrived in Pasadena on December 1, 1928. He was given the title of associate in optics and instrument design. His first task was to design a small telescope to be used for the site survey for the 200-inch telescope. A dozen such telescopes were made and used for testing sites throughout the southwest United States in 1929 and 1930. Porter made sketches of all the sites he personally visited and in all, made over a thousand sketches and detailed pencil drawings relating to the project. Palomar Mountain was selected in 1934 as the site of the 200-inch telescope, and the dome and the building housing the great telescope were designed by Porter.<sup>20</sup>

The Rockefeller grant also provided for three new buildings on the campus. Porter completed the plans for the astrophysics laboratory first, then turned his

attention to the machine shop and the optical shop. By the summer of 1933 all the buildings were in operation.

Meanwhile, Hale, in 1929, had also commissioned Elihu Thomson and his associates at the General Electric Company to make large mirror disks of fused silica. They spent more than two years trying and failed. By the end of 1931, Hale decided to try somewhere else. He asked Corning Glass Works to produce a series of Pyrex mirrors — from a 30-inch to a 60-inch to a 120-inch, and finally to a 200-inch. Weight was a major obstacle; it was estimated that a solid Pyrex disk 200 inches in diameter would weigh more than 40 tons.<sup>21</sup>

Francis Pease designed a ribbed disk that would cut the weight while preserving the necessary stiffness. Viewed from the back, the glass disk was somewhat similar in design to a waffle iron.

By June 1932, Corning had made and sent to Pasadena a ribbed-back disk 30 inches in diameter. Following a series of tests in Pasadena, a 60-inch ribbed disk was successfully cast, then the 120-inch, after which preparations for the 200-inch disk began.

A beehive oven was used to heat the 200-inch disk during the casting operation at Corning. Actually, two 200-inch disks were cast. The second 200-inch disk was cast on December 2, 1934. Pouring the molten glass into the mold took seven hours; the disk was then sealed in the annealer where it remained for many months.<sup>22</sup> In January, 1936, final plans for transporting the disk to Pasadena were made. It was wrapped in a carpet of felt, cushioned with sponge rubber, and then placed in a steel-plated crate. The crate was then bolted upright in a well-type freight car, built for the transcontinental trip by the New York Central Railroad.<sup>23</sup> It started its journey west on the morning of March 26, 1936, and the train pulled into Pasadena on April 10. The



*The 200-inch disk upon its arrival in Pasadena on April 10, 1936. Scores of people watched the train pull in, including astronomer Edwin Hubble, far right.*

disk was then hauled to the optical shop at Caltech.

Millikan had an impressive network of industrial, financial, academic, and government connections. Without them, Caltech could not have survived the 1929 stock market crash and the great depression that settled over America in the thirties.

In spite of the failure in 1930 of a large trust, Millikan balanced the budget and found the money, besides, to support special research projects.

The faculty met Millikan halfway. They voted to take a ten percent cut in salary in 1932. Millikan was counting on this gesture to meet half of the school's deficit.<sup>24</sup>

During the depression years, Millikan, Hale, and Noyes personally met a small portion of Caltech's deficit. For a time, Hale and several Trustees of the Institute supported Linus Pauling's chemical research. To make up the balance of the deficit, which in 1932, approached \$80,000, Millikan spoke to several key friends of the Institute. Each friend had already pledged money for a particular building. Millikan asked if the income from these funds could be diverted to the meeting of Caltech's current expenses. The donors agreed.<sup>25</sup> Aside from the 200-inch project, building construction on the campus came to a halt. It resumed with gusto in 1937. The Arms and Mudd Laboratories of the Geological Sciences began to take form to the west of the astrophysics building. Across the cypress-flanked Mall, behind Gates, the excavation for the Crellin Laboratory of chemistry and the second unit of

Kerckhoff Laboratory of biology also began.

Millikan consulted his faculty less and less during the thirties. If they complained about this (and some did), they nevertheless recognized Millikan's genius as a money-raiser for the Institute.

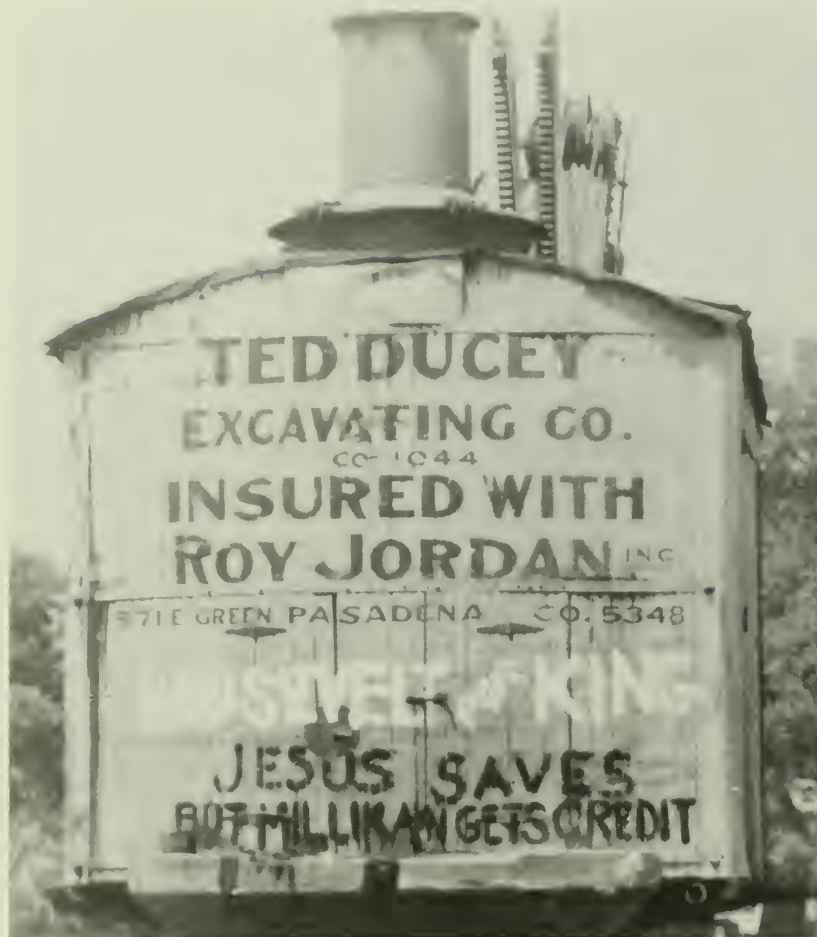
So did the students. An anonymous Caltech graffiti artist added his message to others on the steam shovel several days after it arrived on the campus to begin excavations for Crellin. Underneath "Roosevelt For King" and "Jesus Saves," the student wrote: "But Millikan Gets Credit."

There are less generous interpretations. Former Caltech students recall that some people understood the "Millikan Gets Credit" sign on the steam shovel to mean that Millikan took too much credit.<sup>26</sup> Either way, the students often have the last word at Caltech.

Caltech drew most of its undergraduates from neighboring communities. Although we don't think of it today as a commuter college, Caltech could only accommodate a small fraction of its all-male student body prior to the construction of four student houses in 1931.

Student life changed dramatically when the new dormitories opened. For the first time in Caltech's history, the majority of undergraduates were living together on campus. What has come down from the thirties are records of various faculty and administrative committees set up to deal with student matters: manuals of etiquette, letters of irate parents, and a host of other written and visual documents — which





*Caltech students added their own bit of graffiti to this steam shovel excavating for the Crellin Laboratory of Chemistry.*

taken together, suggest that the Caltech student of fifty years ago enjoyed taking on the campus authorities.

For one thing, the students were great petition writers. When Millikan in the early thirties announced that tuition rates were going up, the students immediately circulated a petition denouncing the action. On that one Millikan had the last say. When a student waiter was suspended by the dormitory housekeeper for failing to show up for his duties, the other student waiters petitioned the administration; they threatened to walk off the job as well. The housekeeper capitulated.<sup>27</sup>

With the coming of student houses came the Faculty Committee on Campus Life and Interests, and their rules. The preamble to the original student house by-laws begins: "Ideally, each house should

be a mature, self-governing community." Having pointed this out, the committee then set about the task of helping the Caltech student achieve his civic potential. After sober reflection and deliberation, the school's elders settled on fourteen commandments of Caltech student life. Among them were:

"There shall be no willful destruction or defacing of property in the Houses."

"There shall be no firecrackers in the Houses."

"Students shall keep off the roof."

"There will be no water fights inside the House."

"During vacations, none of the above rules is suspended."<sup>28</sup>

The students listened, but they didn't always heed. One friendly fight in Fleming and Dabney Houses began on the afternoon of February 20, 1935, and continued in an amicable way into the

evening. The next morning, the damages were tallied up. Fleming House needed one new teak door and some new roof tiles, and the water in the hall needed immediate attention. Over in Dabney, there were a couple of broken windows, a broken broom, door bolt and chain, and possibly the court walls needed refinishing. The damage to both houses was about \$300, the annual tuition fee for undergraduate students in those days.<sup>29</sup>

Millikan promptly called a meeting of his Executive Council. Millikan was famous for doing most of the talking at these meetings. He would present an issue, think it through for the whole group, and then dismiss everyone with the statement, "Well, gentlemen, I'm glad to see you all agree with me." On such occasions, Millikan's favorite expression was "All right-thinking men must agree with me."<sup>30</sup>

Now Millikan decided that what Caltech needed was a faculty committee on student houses. A committee was formed on the spot. The students, understanding the power structure at Caltech, promptly sent a new petition to Millikan about the food situation in the student houses. The petition criticized the planning and preparation of meals. "For \$1.17 per day, which is what we pay for food in the Student Houses," the students wrote, "one can eat better food in similar quantities in profit-making establishments."

The students made a number of meal recommendations. Breakfasts, they noted, should include bacon and eggs, not bacon one day and eggs the next. The scrambled eggs were too watery and often required draining. Fleming House in particular voted down stewed apricots and prunes. Complaints about meats and vegetables tied for second place. The bean, hot dog, and brown bread meal was very unpopular. Other universally unpopular foods included brussel sprouts, pineapple pie, and soggy

cake with fruit topping.<sup>31</sup>

Food also figured in festivities before the football game with Occidental. As part of the Pajamarino preceding the game, the students had a food free-for-all in the dining room. Caltech's elders took a dim view of this practice, and asked the resident associates in the houses to explain their charges' behavior. The resident associate of Dabney House, Donald Clark, a Caltech man himself, hastened to place the campus tradition in perspective. "... We must remember that we are dealing with young men who are filled with enthusiasm and particularly at this time with spirit in anticipation of the Pajamarino," he wrote the dean of students. "None of us would care to see this enthusiasm and spirit completely subdued."<sup>32</sup>

Clark did allow, in his letter, that no resident associate had ever attended one of these Pajamarino dinners. He had it on good authority, however, that the food caused no permanent disfigurement to the walls, ceilings, or furniture. Needless to say, on Pajamarino nights, the kitchen prepared less food. And of course, all the students came to dinner dressed in pajamas.

The Caltech students also became Caltech scientists. Roscoe Dickinson was Caltech's very first Ph.D., earning his degree in 1920. Noyes hired him on the spot as a member of the chemistry staff. By 1930, Dickinson had risen to the rank of associate professor. His four younger chemistry colleagues—Badger, Beckman, Swift, and Yost—were all Caltech Ph.D.s. Physics appointments followed the same pattern.

Millikan and Noyes systematically tapped their own students from the 1920s on. By 1930, Bridge laboratory was ranked as the leading producer of important physics papers in the country. "This productivity," explained Caltech's leaders, reflected the efforts of the younger faculty and "every [younger]

member of the physics department has been essentially grown on the spot. . . ."<sup>33</sup>

If we look back today at the thirties and ask the question: What was it that propelled Caltech into greatness, the answer is, its own students.

All the photographs are from the Caltech Archive collections.

## Notes

1. A general history of Caltech does not exist. The pre-Caltech period, 1891-1920, is covered in a series of articles by Irma W. Buwalda, "The Roots of the California Institute of Technology," *Engineering and Science*, XXX (October, 1966): 8-12; (November, 1966): 20-26; (December, 1966): 18-23. The best contemporary account of the school in the thirties is "California Institute of Technology," *Fortune*, VI (July, 1932): 18-31, 88-101.
2. Enrollment figures, faculty lists, and courses are summarized in the quarterly issues of the *Bulletin of the California Institute of Technology* (Pasadena: printed for the Institute, 1920-1940), Vols. 29-48.
3. Robert A. Millikan, *The Autobiography of Robert A. Millikan* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950), p. 14.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
5. Quoted in Earnest C. Watson, "A. A. Noyes," *Engineering and Science*, XXXII (October, 1968): 27. For the general biographical details of Noyes' life, see Linus Pauling, "Arthur Amos Noyes," *Biographical Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences*, XXXI (1958): 322-346.
6. Recent biographical studies of Einstein include: Banesh Hoffman in collaboration with Helen Dukas, *Albert Einstein: Creator and Rebel* (New York: Viking Press, 1972) and Ronald Clark, *Einstein: The Life and Times* (New York: World Publishing, 1971).
7. Letter to the Editor, *Los Angeles Times*, March 6, 1931.
8. Einstein to Hale, October 14, 1913, George Ellery Hale Papers, Millikan Library, Institute Archives, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA., Box 154, "E" Miscellaneous file (hereafter, GEH Papers). For details of Hale's life, see Helen Wright, *Explorer of the Universe: A Biography of George Ellery Hale* (New York: Dutton, 1966).
9. Einstein to Millikan, August 1, 1931, Robert A. Millikan Papers, Box 39.7 (Hereinafter, RAM Papers).
10. Richard Chace Tolman Papers, Box 4.16, February 5, 1931. See also Judith Goodstein, "Richard Chace Tolman," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, XIII (New York: Scribners, 1976): 429-430.
11. M. J. Blakely filmclip, copy deposited in Institute Archives.
12. Quoted in "Charles F. Richter," transcript of an oral interview conducted by Ann Scheid, Oral History Project, Millikan Library, Institute Archives, 1979, p. 32.
13. Details of Einstein's visits to southern California are reported extensively in Clark, *Einstein*, pp. 430-460.
14. Quoted in "Earnest Watson," Transcript of an oral interview conducted by Larry Shirley, 1969, pp. 11-12.
15. Quoted in "Carl D. Anderson," Transcript of an oral interview conducted by Harriet Lyle, 1980, pp. 25-26.
16. Hale to L. F. Hartman, August 5, 1929, GEH Papers, Box 69. Hale chose this topic in the hope of "interesting someone like Yerkes, Hooker, and Carnegie. . . , who might wish to provide the means of penetrating farther into space." *Ibid.*
17. Hale to Rose, February 14, 1928, GEH Papers, Box 35.
18. Quoted in Hale, "Biographical Notes," February 8, 1933, GEH Papers, Box 92.
19. Hale to Porter, November 17, 1928, GEH Papers, Box 33. For a full account of Porter's life, see Berton C. Willard, *Russell W. Porter* (Freeport, Maine: Bond Wheelwright Co., 1976).
20. Willard, *Porter*, pp. 175-200.
21. Hale, "The Astrophysical Observatory of the California Institute of Technology," *The Astrophysical Journal*, LXXXII (September, 1935): 116-118. See also Helen Wright, *Palomar: The World's Largest Telescope* (New York: MacMillan, 1952).
22. Hale, "Astrophysical Observatory," 118-119. Technical details of the project, including the design of the telescope mount and the construction at Palomar Mountain, are discussed in J. A. Anderson, "The Astrophysical Observatory of the California Institute of Technology," *The Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada*, XXXVI (May-June, 1942): 177-200.
23. Bruce H. Rule Papers, Caltech Archives, Box 9.2.
24. California Institute of Technology, *Faculty Minutes*, May 29, 1925-June 7, 1935, p. 141, Institute Archives.
25. H. S. Mudd to Millikan, August 15, 1932, Edward C. Barrett Papers, Box 1.8. The financial information is based on administrative documents collected by Barrett in preparation for a history of the school. *Ibid.*
26. Personal communications, C. Wilts to the author, November 14, 1980; J. Bonner to the author, November 25, 1980.



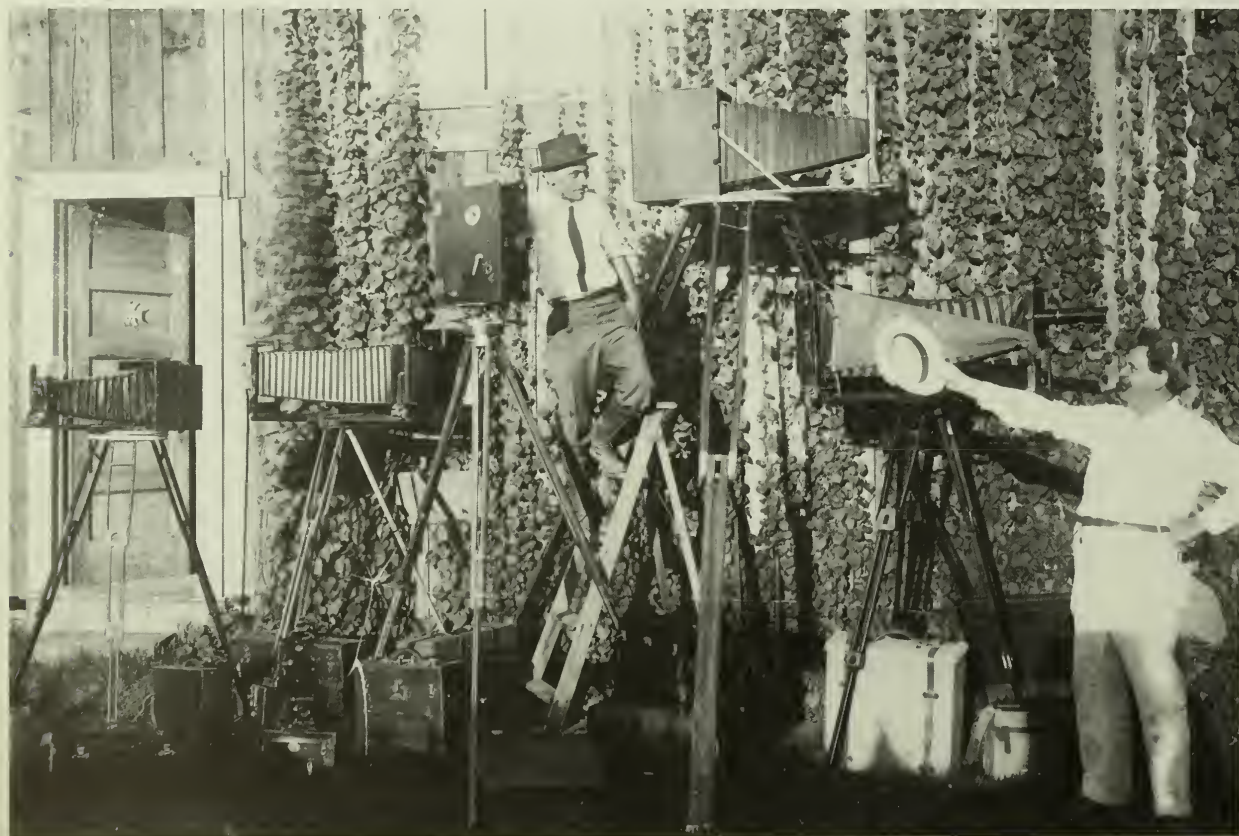
27. Members of the Ricketts House Waiters' Union to W. Wheeler, June 1, 1937, "Committee on Student Houses," 1933-1937, CIT Historical Files, Box 35.3 (Hereinafter cited as CSH).
28. "Student House Rules and Policies," n.d., CIT Historical Files, Box 35.2.
29. W. Hertenstein to F. W. Hinrichs, February 21, 1935, CSH, Box 35.3.
30. Shirley, "Earnest C. Watson," pp. 3-4.
31. "Interhouse Committee Recommendations as to Meals," April, 1935, CSH, Box 35.3.
32. Clark to F. W. Hinrichs, October 26, 1936, CSH, Box 35.3.
33. "Research Activities at CIT," October 6, 1928, p. 3, GEH Papers, Box 6.

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# **“POP” LAVAL**

## San Joaquin Valley Photographer

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*Claude C. “Pop” Laval (on ladder) posing with his studio equipment and assistant, Levi Monroe about 1914.*

When historians begin writing the saga of photography in California, they will necessarily confront the careers and contributions of a batch of heretofore neglected commercial photographers who labored outside the artistic limelight, often under less than ideal conditions, in the rural areas of the state. And there is no doubt that one of the most important of these personalities will be the energetic, innovative, slightly-built refugee from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania who worked in and around Fresno for over half a century—Claude C. “Pop” Laval.

Devoting all of his energy, every day, from 1912 until 1966 to photographing the people, places, events, towns, architecture, industries and farms of the San Joaquin Valley, Laval created a remarkable pictorial record. His is one of the most extensive ever compiled by a California photographer—over a hundred thousand negatives of which almost five hundred glass plates survive—a nearly definitive visual diary of the region bordered by Bakersfield, Stockton, the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Diablo Range.

Laval was also a solid craftsman whose interest in creative lens work inevitably led him to adopt and develop much new technology. Above all, however, he was a highly successful entrepreneur who came to Fresno with nothing yet somehow managed to expand his business from a cow-barn arrangement into the finest studio in the San Joaquin Valley. A look at his career thus illuminates many aspects of commercial photography, particularly the balance between the artistic and money-making dimensions, the convergence of creativity and the California dream, and how time, place and personality combine to determine success or failure.<sup>1</sup>

The son of a successful inventor and engineer, Claude Laval was born in New York City in 1882. Moving with his family first to Chicago and then Brooklyn, he took his first job in 1896, in Braddock,

Pennsylvania, where he worked as an architect and civil engineer, this despite being fourteen years of age and without even a high school diploma. Two years later, he became foreman of the Cohocton Iron Works at Monongahela.<sup>2</sup>

Laval's interest in photography evolved somewhat unexpectedly at this time when in 1901 he purchased for five dollars an apparently broken 8 x 10-inch “crackerbox” view camera. Finding the ground glass focusing screen had been reversed, Laval corrected the problem, creating for himself a fine piece of equipment which he would use regularly for the next sixty-five years.<sup>3</sup>

Experimenting with his new camera, Laval eventually concluded that the rewards of photography were far greater than those of industrial labor. Consequently in 1906 he quit his job at the iron works and accepted employment at R. W. Johnston studios, largest photographic firm in Pittsburg. Working there for the next five years, Laval acquired a broad foundation in the various technical aspects of his new profession. By 1910, however, he had become increasingly dissatisfied with the limited opportunities and brutal winters. He was determined to establish his own business, preferably somewhere warm, and his thoughts turned frequently to the spaciousness of the west, especially California. “I wanted more than anything to see real sunshine and enjoy it,” he recalled many years later.<sup>4</sup>

So in 1911, Laval and his wife Sadie boarded a train to Fresno where his mother and three sisters had settled following the death of Papa Laval. Arriving with less than \$90 in his possession, he accepted the first job he found—as a janitor and handyman for Chester

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Richard Steven Street won the 1978 Phelan Award for his study of the origins of California agribusiness. He is presently completing a multivolume illustrated history of California farm workers. He lives in his home town, San Anselmo, California, and writes for the *Pacific Sun*.



Rowell, editor of the *Fresno Republican* and the town's leading citizen. Doing everything from bookkeeping and carpentry to sweeping the floors at the Fresno Unitarian Church and driving out to various schools with Rowell in order to visit with children and hand out small bags of candy, Laval remained with Rowell until late 1912. It was in that year when he decided to put his "crackerbox" to work.<sup>5</sup>

Lacking the two prerequisites for a photography business—a darkroom and capital—Laval decided to launch his career from the barn behind his mother's home at 656 North Van Ness Avenue. Knocking out the cow stalls and installing a wooden floor, he created a workable if somewhat primitive space, but there were also certain defects. For one, the barn could not be made light secure, a problem which forced Laval to develop his film and prints at night. Another difficulty was the smallness of the lab: it would not accommodate the over-sized chemical holding pans required for making large prints. As a result, Laval often had to take his prints out behind the barn, again at night, and wash them down with a mop and bucket and garden hose.<sup>6</sup>

Announcing his business in full-page ads appearing in the *Fresno Morning Republican*, Laval declared: "I specialize in commercial work of every description and size such as conventions, banquets, gatherings, land development, construction of buildings, railroads, irrigation projects etc. Another feature of my business," he stressed, "is taking photographs to be used in connection with lawsuits and legal work. I have . . . thorough equipment to handle all the above work, no matter what the magnitude of the job may be, or where it is located . . . I do my work neatly and with dispatch, returning a proof at all banquets within 45 minutes after the photo is taken . . ."<sup>7</sup>

Laval was not the only photographer in town. At least a half-dozen studios had been active since the

1890s; some even dated back to the 1870s. Yet, Laval's timing could hardly have been better. With a population of 40,000 and vast amounts of prime land, Fresno was on the verge of shedding its railroad influence and blossoming into the marketing, production and distribution center for a vast, irrigated, agricultural wonderland—in short, the perfect situation for an aspiring commercial photographer.<sup>8</sup>

The bulk of Laval's work that first year consisted of indoor photography, everything from the *Fresno Republican* Cooking School and the Raisin City Gun Club Mud Hen Shoot to the Brickmasons' and Plumbers' Convention. A high point in the year occurred on July 16, when Laval served as exclusive photographer to the San Francisco wedding of Jennie Crocker. He made forty-two glass plates, all of which became the property of the Crocker family and have subsequently disappeared. The same month he also photographed the Women's National Confederation meeting at the Cliff House in San Francisco.<sup>9</sup>

Laval shot many of these early images using smokeless flashlight equipment—the first such equipment in the San Joaquin Valley and a vast improvement over the old, somewhat dangerous and unreliable system of flashpans and special flash powders. "No noise, smoke or confusion . . .," his ads promised. But not always. Misfortunes were numerous. Every so often the bulbs blew up. Once, while he was photographing animals at a circus, an exploding flashbulb set the animals into a wild frenzy requiring the evacuation of the arena. On other occasions, the bulbs malfunctioned, burning Laval's hair, hands and clothes and forcing him to resort to flash powder and pans, much to the dismay of his assistants whose job was to fill and arrange the dreaded equipment.<sup>10</sup>

Laval's inauguration in outdoor photography came unexpectedly one day when J. C. Forkner hired the



*"Pop" Laval (center) and his assistant, Leon Perraud (right), preparing to soar above the Fresno Fair in 1914. Their films, shot at an altitude of 1,000 feet, were later used in newsreels.*

young photographer to document a massive and some said idiotic attempt at reclaiming over 12,000 acres of barren, worthless "hog wallow" and "hard pan" just north of Fresno. Over the next three years, Laval set his camera up in exactly the same spot and recorded in microcosm what was occurring throughout the valley, as well as what he would be called upon to document again and again over the next fifty-four years: massed Fordson tractors going round and round in well-organized confusion as they leveled the land; the use of 660,000 lbs. of dynamite to blast holes for 600,000 fig trees; the dredging and digging of twenty-five miles of irrigation canals and 135 miles of lateral ditches; the building of Van Ness Boulevard, seven miles long, shaded with ornamental trees and running straight as a surveyor's mark from Fresno to Forkner's Gardens—in sum, the transformation of an ugly landscape into a veritable Garden of Eden.<sup>11</sup>

The largest and most important photographic assignment of this period was a position offered by George C. Roeding, head of the California Association of Nurserymen, who hired Laval as official photographer for the San Joaquin Counties Association. Laval's task was frankly propagandistic: publicize the seven valley counties, focusing on their many assets and attractive qualities, and prepare photo presentations for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego.

Launching himself into the project, Laval soon discovered that the standard photographic technology left much to be desired. The flat landscape, he concluded, could only be fully portrayed with wide-angle lenses and circuit and panoramic cameras, then virtually unknown in the valley and as yet used by few photographers. Convincing the Association to purchase such equipment, he tested it for the first

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time on August 5, 1914, in a corn field about one mile west of Laton. Finding the result to be satisfactory, he then proceeded to document the wheat fields, vineyards, wineries, packing sheds, canneries, peach drying yards and irrigation projects which dotted the countryside.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, Laval also began experimenting with hand-cranked 35 mm. movie cameras. One of his first projects—an extremely valuable documentary of the “blastophaga grassorum” (the tiny fig wasp which pollinated Calmyrna figs)—utilized a crude close-up lens consisting of a round bowl filled with water. Other subjects which he captured on over 50,000 ft. of film included the McNeil and Libby peach cannery plant at Selma; grain harvesting operations in the dry lake region near Corcoran;

planting shade trees along the state highway between Fresno and Herndon; the first annual Raisin Day Parade and Pageant; “the world’s record raisin shipment” on April 30, 1914, consisting of sixty box cars filled with three million packages of raisins; and “The Story of a Peach,” a time lapse motion picture of the C. T. Walker peach orchard taken from the same spot in winter, spring, summer and fall and including some excellent harvesting scenes, perhaps the earliest motion pictures of California farm workers.<sup>13</sup>

Completing his work in late 1914, Laval first edited his movie film, then retired to a specially equipped studio in Merced where he and Joe Thulen, who had cooperated in making scenes of the north valley, printed sixty-four hand-tinted still picture enlargements measuring forty inches by eight feet. Dis-



played in the California State building and the San Joaquin Hall, this visual material attracted considerable praise and commentary. It also ensured Laval's success, publicized his business, and brought him the kinds of clients that would be the mainstay of his career—farmers and farm-related industries including everything from raisin cooperatives, tractor factories and wineries to the county horticultural association, the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, the American Cyanamid Chemical Corporation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Army Corps of Engineers.<sup>14</sup>

All of this spelled incessant activity for Laval, who became a common sight as he bicycled to and from jobs over the unpaved Fresno roads with his heavy tripod, delicate glass plates and big box camera strapped to his handlebars. "Once another fellow and I carted our paraphernalia to the West Side in a surrey to take some pictures at a duck hunt," he recalled in a 1953 interview. "We converted an outhouse for two into a darkroom and developed our negatives and made our prints right there."<sup>15</sup>

When the bicycle and surrey transportation became obsolete, Laval purchased a car, loaded it with ladders, lights and other equipment and turned himself into a mobile studio. On many occasions he drove to the site of a parade where he leaned his ladder against a building or water tower, hoisted a camera onto one shoulder and climbed up the ladder until he reached the best view point. In one especially revealing picture taken in 1918, Laval is perched in what appears to be an old English walnut tree cradling a hand-cranked 35 mm. camera at the start of a road race which he is filming for Old Gaumont Weekly, a film service engaged in distributing his film to various movie halls throughout the valley.<sup>16</sup>

For all his enthusiasm, however, Laval would not accept every kind of photographic assignment. He hated portraiture, at least portraiture in the traditional

sense of formal studio sittings. Abhorring this, he labeled as "fakery" the use of props and the practice, common at the time, of retouching prints and negatives. Yet Laval did not completely exclude such photography, as we can see in his images confronting the extinction of local Indian tribes, lamenting the death of old pioneers who had trekked overland to California via wagon train or simply recording a common domestic scene which he found interesting.<sup>17</sup>

By the early 1920s, Laval had become a local institution. He held a virtual monopoly on commercial photography in Fresno, a position he solidified by merging with his main competitor, F. C. Ninnis, a photographer who had been active in California since 1895 and in the Fresno area since 1904. This association continued until 1928, when Laval dropped his partnership with Ninnis, embarked on a program of further growth, diversification and consolidation, and incorporated as Laval Studios, a corporation capitalized at \$75,000, employing a staff of five and operating out of a former Pontiac showroom near the courthouse in downtown Fresno.<sup>18</sup>

Little information exists on the Pontiac showroom and studio. The only reliable source is R. V. Powell, a veteran photographer who as a teenager loaded flash pans and generally assisted Laval in his various ventures. Recalling Laval's establishment fifty years after working there he remembered how:

The old Pontiac showroom had this very unique projection system which "Pop" used for making his giant prints. There wasn't another like it. Basically the apparatus consisted of a big mirror outside the building, fixed at a 45 degree angle to the sun, which reflected off the mirror through a hole in the wall and into an enlarging camera. From there the camera shot the light through a negative onto a wall or big, movable easel holding a piece of sensitized photo paper.<sup>19</sup>

Regrettably, Laval's projection system has been





*A mother and child—one of Laval's first glass plates, c. 1908.*

*Laval in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, 1916, with his hand-cranked 35 mm. camera.*



*A water driller, 1915, somewhere near Fresno.*





*Zapp's Park swimming pool, roller coaster  
and ferris wheel; summer 1912.*



*Fresno Raisin Festival  
c. 1915.*

*Clovis Dental Clinic, 1918.*



lost or destroyed. So too has his set-up for making color prints, surely the first of its kind in the valley. All that remains is Powell's description as follows:

Laval used the Ives Process and it was especially interesting in that it combined stereoscopic separations of red, green and blue transparencies projected in register to make the final print. "Pop" got interested in it because he thought it would work well in advertising. I remember making some prints of the Sun Maid Raisin package label. But they never looked right. Besides, the process was very expensive and complicated and there was very little market for color work. That's why "Pop" dropped it.<sup>20</sup>

Such experimentation says much about Laval as a photographer. Evaluated in conjunction with his willingness to climb about in trees or water towers or whatever else was handy and effective plus his pioneering work with smokeless flash equipment and both circuit and 35 mm. movie cameras, it reveals an enthusiastic personality capable of handling any assignment no matter how unusual or difficult or dangerous.<sup>21</sup>

One assignment illustrates these qualities especially well. It was a pack trip and photographic reconnaissance expedition, conducted for the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, which Laval led into the upper reaches of the Kings Canyon during August and September of 1928. Requiring over 1,000 lbs. of equipment and an ascent via deer trails and mules along the narrow valley to a height of 10,600 ft., the trip presented many physical and technological challenges. But for Laval, an avid fisherman and outdoorsman, it was paradise.

Using a new 200 mm. telephoto lens, he shot 35 mm. motion picture views of unreachable, snow-capped peaks, as well as some one hundred and forty still images of North Dome, Sentinel Ridge, Roaring River Falls, McKinley Rock and the Kings River Canyon itself. Upon returning to Fresno, he made hundreds of eight by ten inch contact prints which

the Chamber of Commerce used to illustrate brochures and pamphlets and calendars and talks designed to obtain government support for a road opening up the Kings River Canyon. "Harvesting a big crop of tourists is looked for as a result," commented the *Fresno Republican*.<sup>22</sup>

Widely circulated and attracting much press coverage, Laval's scenic views helped transform Kings River Canyon from a wilderness accessible only by pack animals into a region easily reached by car, just a few hours drive from Fresno. They also brought a deluge of new assignments, so many that during the 1930s, as other photographers folded up their operations for lack of work, Laval actually expanded his business. He moved into an even larger studio at 314 North Van Ness Avenue and reorganized according to a kind of hierarchy of tasks: Laval took responsibility for all policy decisions and certain key jobs, while his son Claude Jr. handled middle level work. The various assistants took care of all processing, printing, developing, billing and such routine assignments as insurance company requests for pictures of car crashes at unmarked crossroads and public relations shots of the local Roller Derby entrepreneur posed in front of his new Cadillac.<sup>23</sup>

One significant assignment lasting throughout the 1930s centered on the construction of dams, canals and power generating plants. The water and electricity from these projects would provide the basis for the expansion of agriculture and settlement in the San Joaquin Valley. Consequently, Laval spent much of his time at various construction sites photographing for newspapers and public relations firms and utilities, particularly San Joaquin Light and Power and Southern California Edison, principal developers of the resources east of Fresno.<sup>24</sup>

From a strictly financial standpoint, Laval's most important account during this period was with American Cyanamid Chemical Corporation



*Babe Ruth (third from left) and Lou Gehrig (left) are greeted by Father Crawley (second from left), Fresno, 1927.*



*Ku Klux Klan induction ceremonial held at the Fresno Baseball Park on the night of April 17, 1925.*





22232

(ACCC). It consisted of photographing ads for CYANOGAS—a calcium cyanide poison manufactured by ACCC and used to control the grape leaf hopper, a pest which often ravaged vineyards in the area around Fresno. Some ads were banal. One of them, running beneath a Laval photograph of a bottle of Castor Oil read: “Well, for the past 25 years CYANOGAS has done to grape leaf hoppers just what Castor Oil does to one’s system: CLEANS IT OUT.” Another ad, published in the *Fresno Bee*, referred to Laval’s picture of eight Indians in full Hollywood regalia. “These Indians long ago quit scalping their enemies,” it began. “The grape grower has one enemy in the grape leaf hopper that needs scalping annually and for the past 25 years he has had the help of CYANOGAS . . . Always dependable, CYANOGAS not only helped scalp the hoppers but it drove them out of the vineyards.”<sup>25</sup>

The CYANOGAS account continued from 1935 until well into the 1940s, paying handsomely but consisting of unchallenging work which was valueless both as art and history. It revealed Laval’s unique ability to hustle, balance the various dimensions of his business and keep his operations solvent during hard times. Far more creative and useful, however, was the aerial photography he did for the state and federal governments.

Laval was no stranger to aerial photography. Beginning this part of his work in 1914 when he and an assistant floated in a balloon to an altitude of 1,000 ft. in order to photograph crowds attending a Fresno fair, he expanded his aerial photography during the 1920s when he and pilot Jack Schneider of Schneider Aero Service conducted extensive surveys in an especially-rigged Varney biplane. Consisting mostly of reconnaissance over the San Joaquin Light and Power Company watershed, this photography also included anything Laval and Schneider were curious about, as well as surveys of floods, suspected grain

field arson and measurements of the growth of Fresno.<sup>26</sup>

Because of this experience, the United States Department of Agriculture hired Laval in 1937 to photograph 20,000 square miles of California farm land. Lasting from 1938 until 1940, the project required over 500 hours of flight time and produced an extremely valuable survey map which supplied data essential to the planning of flood control/irrigation reservoirs at Behymer and Red Bank Lakes. It also led to a second aerial project, commissioned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, in which Laval shot 2,700 photos over a strip of land six to twenty miles wide and running from Vicksburg, Mississippi north to the Tennessee and Kentucky border. Taken with a new mapping camera at an altitude of 8,370 feet, these pictures helped chart the progress of flood control measures along the Mississippi and its tributaries. Except for his early photography in Pittsburg, this was the only assignment Laval ever accepted outside of California.<sup>27</sup>

In the midst of all this flying about, Laval somehow completed his largest mural—a thirty-four by fourteen foot panorama depicting one of Fresno’s finest vineyards. Prominently displayed at the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay, it dazzled crowds and evoked extensive praise among valley newspapers which described it as the work of the San Joaquin Valley’s preeminent commercial photographer.<sup>28</sup>

Such accolades and success, however, had no effect on Laval’s lifestyle or his photography. A spunky, easy-going, buoyant man, he thought nothing of the inconveniences associated with hefting about his big glass plate view camera. Of this beloved “cracker-box” he once told the *Fresno Bee*: “Nobody will ever get that old box away from me. People always make fun of it. A friend of mine says a pawnbroker wouldn’t give me \$5 for it. But I can do with that old



thing what he can't do with \$350 worth of equipment."<sup>29</sup>

When the small format camera technology became popular in the 1950s, Laval—now universally referred to simply as “Pop”, though no one can recall who first applied the label or when—simply refused to adopt the new equipment. Only at the insistence of his family, which believed that a seventy-year-old man should not be carting about a fifty pound camera and thirty-five pound tripod, did “Pop” begin using a small, hand-held 2¼ x 2¼ inch Rollei-flex camera. But that was the extent of his modernization. Of the new equipment, he said “I can't keep up with it.”<sup>30</sup>

As “Pop” grew old he withdrew to his cow barn and photo lab—his “little old den,” as he called it—where he often entertained old buddies with gingerbread cookies and conversation. Over the half century, the walls had become cluttered with old pictures and during the years 1955-1965 those pictures served as a never-ending source of inspiration for a weekly column, “Pop Says,” which Claude wrote for the *Fresno Guide*.<sup>31</sup>

Looking at his old photographs, Laval would daydream, recall some old friend or event, then begin pecking away at his typewriter. Writing nostalgically about what he had seen during fifty years as a commercial photographer, “Pop” wove personal reminiscence with his principal cause: the preservation of Fresno's heritage, particularly its old historical buildings. Too many structures were being demolished without even the slightest consideration of their value as living monuments, he would say. Yes, Fresno was growing. But for the better?

“Pop” lived to see some of the old buildings restored—the Kearney Estate and Millerton Courthouse, for example. But he always felt the losses outweighed the gains, that the “chicken pie establishments” and the “Mayfair Markets” were taking over. “Fresno County,” he pleaded in one column,



“will be the one community, probably will be the only in the entire state without a single historical building left standing.”<sup>32</sup>

Determined that his photographic record preserve at least part of what was being destroyed, Laval back in 1935 had constructed a brick vault to store his precious collection of negatives. The wisdom of that decision became apparent one night in January, 1964, when a teenage arsonist set fire to the basement of the studio storage building. Luckily, the fire department extinguished the blaze within an hour. But the combination of heat, smoke, water and steam ruined over 30,000 negatives.<sup>33</sup>

After the fire, “Pop” seemed to lose strength. He entered Fresno Community Hospital for tests on May 13, 1965, scarcely fifteen minutes after completing the next to the last “Pop Says” column. Out after a short stay, he re-entered again on December 6. His beloved Sadie, who had been in failing health for

many months, died on December 11. "Pop" struggled on, underwent major surgery, but never left the hospital. He died at age eighty-three on February 20, 1966, of cancer.<sup>34</sup>

The obituary notices eulogized Laval as a warm gentleman, "the dean of San Joaquin Valley photographers . . .," the man who did the most toward the goal of preserving Fresno's heritage and the heritage of the surrounding countryside. Lost in all of the accolades, however, was the reason why "Pop" persisted. Ironically, it had little to do with money, art or recognition.<sup>35</sup>

Photography and life were inextricably linked in "Pop" Laval's very being. As the quintessential frozen easterner coming west in search of opportunity and finding it, he continually praised his being alive in a warm place—in "God's Country," as he called the San Joaquin Valley. This feeling, which was the guiding element in his work, was so strong and so pervasive and lasted so long that just two years before his death, "Pop" wrote in one of his newspaper columns how "every night I get down on my hands and knees and give Him thanks for the privilege I have enjoyed in spending over 50 Christmasses in this wonderful part of the world."<sup>36</sup>

Today "Pop" Laval's pictures—catalogued and organized by his grandson, Jerome Laval—survive and provide us with a unique personal account, celebration, historical record and synopsis of what he saw before his lens during a lifetime of photographing. Clear, detailed, recorded on big, old equipment used well into the era of miniaturized camera paraphernalia, these images go beyond standard commercial work. They reveal a special concern for the day to day, ordinary and extraordinary events of life—everything from fires, floods, funerals and factories to athletic events, meetings of the Ku Klux Klan, old timers, and that day in January, 1919, when the "Human Fly," after sucking the blood from a raw

piece of beefsteak and using no equipment except his hands and feet, scaled the ten story Bank of Italy building before a crowd of 5,000 Fresno citizens.<sup>37</sup>

The photograph on page 258 is courtesy of the *Fresno Bee*. All others are from the author.

## Notes

1. Laval is not mentioned in any of the various surveys of photography in California and the West. Collections of his photographs, many of them uncredited, are in the Bancroft Library, California Historical Society, Fresno County Historical Society, Fresno Public Library, Madera County Historical Society, Pioneer Museum and Haggin Galleries, Stockton, and the Lodi Public Library. Approximately five hundred glass plates measuring 8 x 10 inches are at Graphic Technology, Fresno.
2. Laval's father, Constant, emigrated from Lorraine, France in 1870, settling with his wife, Josephine, in New York. In the late 1880's, Constant invented and perfected the nitrogen-silver mirror-making process. This allowed industries to produce mirrors far more cheaply and quickly than with the old mercury treatment process and it assured the Laval family's prosperity. In the years that followed, Constant patented 19 more inventions and received lucrative jobs. Thus it was in a secure, comfortable family that Claude grew up. See June Muller, "People Interest Lens Veteran," *Fresno Bee*, December 27, 1953; *History of Fresno County, California* (Los Angeles, 1919), v. 2, p. 1438; biographical material in the Fresno Public Library and in Jerome D. Laval to Author, May 14, 1980, Author's possession and a series of interviews with Laval at Graphic Technology during 1978 and 1979.
3. "50 Years of Wedded Life Are Marked by Claude Laval's," *Fresno Bee*, August 14, 1955; "Trip Over Fresno Is Birthday Gift For Aged Woman," *Ibid.*, August 19, 1939 (a reminiscence of Laval's mother); biographical material in the Fresno County Historical Society.
4. Claude C. Laval, "Why I Came to Fresno," *Fresno Bee*, April 23, 1922. See also, Jerome D. Laval, *As Pop Saw It: The Great Central Valley As Seen Through the Lens of A Camera* (Fresno, 1975), Vol. 1, p. 5.
5. Claude C. Laval, "Strolling Down Memory Lane," *Fresno Guide*, March 13, 1958. See also, various references in the Chester Rowell Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California.

6. Carla Goodman, "'Pop' Laval's \$5 Crackerbox," *Pacific Business* (July-August, 1975), Vol. 65, No. 4, pp. 24-27; Jerome D. Laval to Author, May 14, 1980, Author's possession.
7. Clipping, *Fresno Republican*, December 13, 1912, Claude Laval Papers and Correspondence, Graphic Technology, Fresno, California.
8. One of the first photographers in the area was Frank Dusy, about whom nothing more is known than the fact that between 1865 and 1870, after an itinerant career in the gold fields, he had a studio in Millerton, a small settlement in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains east of Fresno, and is listed in the town directory. Among the many prominent photographers boasting long and productive careers in the valley were: John Pitcher Spooner, who opened a studio in Stockton during the 1870's and worked there until the 1930's; V. Covert Martin, also a Stockton photographer active from 1899 until the 1960's; R. H. Powell of Hanford and John Maxwell of Fresno, who founded their businesses in 1895 and 1896 respectively, and whose sons now operate the studios. For more information on Martin and Spooner see R. Coke Wood and Leonard Covello, *Stockton Memories* (Fresno, 1977), pp. v-vii; for Maxwell the only source is Edward F. Maxwell to Author, January 15, 1981, Author's possession; data on Powell is from an interview with R. V. Powell, January 5, 1981; Dusy is listed in the Millerton Directory; for information on Fresno at this time see, William K. Patterson, "Rough and Ready Fresno," *Fresno Bee*, September 22, 1974; Edwin Eaton, *Vintage Fresno* (Fresno, 1965), pp. 36-38.
9. *History of Fresno*, Vol. 2, p. 1438; *Fresno Herald*, July 17, 1912; Laval, "Lest You've Forgotten," no date, draft of an article for the *Fresno Guide*, Laval Papers and Correspondence. The Crocker Museum in Sacramento does not possess the glass plates or any prints that Laval made at the wedding.
10. Clippings, *Fresno Herald* and *Fresno Republican*, no dates, Laval Papers and Correspondence; for the use of flash equipment somewhat later in Laval's career see R. V. Powell Interview, January 5, 1981, Author's possession. Of the dangers of outdoor flash shots, Powell says "The stuff—the flash powder would ignite at a spark. You were always worried, especially at one of those big banquets full of American Legionnaires at night out at Roedding Park. My job was to climb up a ten foot ladder and set the powder in this elevated tray that was about six feet long. When I went up the police would keep everyone clear. I'd empty four bottles of powder, all the time worried about these Legionnaires running around with about four sheets to the wind and puffing on cigars. Eventually I'd get the powder set and when it went off it would make a big boom and produce a lot of smoke."
11. Claude C. Laval, "Blasting a Dream," *Fresno Guide*, March 31, 1960; Laval, "J. C. Forkner," *Ibid.*, no date, Laval Papers and Correspondence; Forkner is also described in Ernestine Winchell, "Holland Colony," *Fresno Republican*, September 7, 1930. See also, various clippings in Fresno Scrapbooks, Bancroft Library.
12. Laval, "More About State of California," *Fresno Guide*, September 27, 1962.
13. Various unidentified clippings, particularly "County Scenes Pictured With Patent Camera," *Fresno Herald*, no date, Laval Papers and Correspondence; see also "Movies Taken of Planting of Trees Along Highway," *Fresno Bee*, April 4, 1914; "Harvesting Scenes in Movies," *Fresno Republican*, June 18, 1914; "To Take Movies of Peach Canning," *Ibid.*, August 7, 1914; "Raisin Day Movies Shown in Chicago," *Ibid.*, May 24, 1916; of the documentary on the fig wasp, Laval recalled how the crude water-bowl lens worked perfectly until half-way through filming he smelled smoke. The rays of the sun, concentrated by the magnifying powers of the bowl, had burned a hole in the table. So Claude moved the bowl to the edge of the table and resumed photographing until his assistant, Leon Perraud, who was holding a leaf upon which the insect crawled, discovered the bowl had focused the sun's rays on his trousers and burned a neat hole. The farm worker pictures are especially significant. Several were later used by the California Commission on Immigration and Housing in its various volumes on the status of the state's agricultural laborers during the years 1914-1919. Though uncredited, these photos depicting housing conditions and Francisco Palomares of the Commission addressing assembled Mexicans are definitely Laval's, as the original glass plates are in Laval's collection at Graphic Technology.
14. Various unidentified clippings, especially "Fair Fashion Show Attracts Crowd," Laval Papers and Correspondence.
15. Quoted in Muller, "People Interest Lens Veteran," and elsewhere in various interviews. Towards the end of 1915 Laval finished a promotional film demonstrating the county weights and measures department shutting down and sealing inaccurate pumps. Shortly thereafter, the Fresno Chamber of Commerce and Commercial Club's Annual Ice and Snow Festival Committee hired him to direct and photograph a comedy designed to publicize winter sports in the nearby Sierra Nevada Mountains as well as lobby for a road into the region. Staged at Huntington Lake—a remote area reached only by railroad to the town of Cascada followed by a ride in a "snowboat" toboggan pulled by four horses—the "Ice Carnival Film," as it was called, turned into a disaster. The icy conditions made filming difficult and took their toll of workers and equipment. Then the final 100 feet of the film including the climactic moment of the comedy, were ruined by the San Francisco processing plant responsible for developing it. As a result, Laval and the entire company of



- actors had to return to the mountains and re-enact and re-film the concluding scenes. See Laval, "Out of the Scrapbook," *Fresno Guide*, February 4, 1963; "Developing Company Loses 100 Feet of C. C. Laval Comedy," *Fresno Republican*, March 7, 1916.
16. Laval, "Lest You've Forgotten." Among the adventures during this time, Laval listed: nearly getting boiled alive by a fiery wave of liquid that rushed down rows of vines when a big wine tank exploded as he was photographing a fire at Barton Winery in 1919; narrowly escaping decapitation when a tow cable snapped while he was busy photographing logging operations in the mountains; luckily avoiding the wheels of a train when he slipped from an engine while filming. At other times he was tossed from speeding automobiles, chased by runaway logs and struck on the head by a heavy box camera as it was being hoisted into a Sequoia tree in Redwood Canyon near Badger. Laval was even threatened by female raisin packers at the Fresno Associated Raisin Company. The problem was that they simply didn't like him coming in and making movies of them toiling away at their jobs. Eventually, however, they consented. See "Just Remembering," *Fresno Guide*, February 20, 1964.
17. *Fresno Bee*, October 6, 1974.
18. Laval, "Why I came To Fresno," and Laval, "Memories From the Good Old Days," draft of *Fresno Guide* article dated June 8, 1961, Laval Papers and Correspondence.
19. R. V. Powell Interview, January 5, 1981, Author's possession.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Laval, "Out of the Scrapbook," *Fresno Guide*, February 4, 1963; Laval, "Right in Your Own Backyard," *Ibid.*, July 10, 1958.
22. Clipping, "Pictures Tell About Kings Canyon," *Fresno Republican*, no date, Laval Papers and Correspondence; "Photo Tour of Sierra Finished," *Fresno Bee*, September 4, 1928; "Pinnacles National Monument," *Ibid.*, July 24, 1927; Laval's tripods weighed 35 lbs. each and he used three of them; his glass plates, packed six to a box, weighed 50 lbs.
23. "Laval Appointed to Photographer's Code," *Fresno Bee*, May 21, 1934; Powell Interview.
24. Various unidentified, undated newspaper clippings, Laval Papers and Correspondence.
25. Fred Howard to Laval, March 7, 1938, and enclosures, Laval Papers and Correspondence. See also, various prints with advertising copy attached.
26. "Fresnans Will Make Air Map of Old Man River," *Fresno Bee*, October 10, 1940. See also, data in the Audiovisual Collection, Still Picture Division, National Archives; Powell Interview.
27. Various unidentified, undated clippings, Laval Papers and Correspondence.
28. The Navy/Marine Corps Museum, Treasure Island, which houses a permanent collection of Exposition photographs, does not have Laval's mural.
29. Quoted in Muller, "People Interest Lens Veteran."
30. Laval, "Father's New Camera," *Fresno Guide*, June 27, 1957.
31. Laval, "Here Today, Over There Tomorrow," *Fresno Guide*, June 28, 1962; Laval, "Notes From My Picture Album," *Ibid.*, June 20, 1957; Laval, "Protection—1913 Style," *Ibid.*, January 15, 1959; Laval, "Just An Old-Timer," *Ibid.*, May 26, 1960; Laval, draft article entitled "Mansion Gains Momentum," Laval Papers and Correspondence. In 1961 Laval sold his company to A. H. "Tony" Mazmanian, a former Fresno and Detroit news photographer who immediately moved the business to 726 North Fulton. However, the deal fell apart when Mazmanian failed to complete the purchase payments. At that point the company reverted to Laval. See, "Ex-Newsman Buys Laval Studios," *Fresno Bee*, March 5, 1961; see also, Laval Interviews.
32. Laval, "A Small But Historical Building," *Fresno Guide*, September 15, 1960; Laval credits the activities of M. T. Kearney, a pioneer vineyardist whose estate and its eleven mile drive were flanked by giant eucalyptus trees, with creating his first interest in Fresno as a future home. See Laval, "From Its First Knee Breeches to Long Pants, Time Marches on For Fresno County," *Fresno Guide*, January 9, 1964.
33. "Firebug Torches Old Laval Studio," *Fresno Bee*, January 6, 1964; Jerome D. Laval to Author, May 14, 1980, Author's possession.
34. "'Pop' Laval, 83, Photography Veteran, Dies," *Fresno Bee*, February 21, 1966; "Mrs. Laval, 85, Photographer's Wife, Is Dead," *Ibid.*, December 23, 1965; Judson W. Conger, "Radioactive Iodine Replaces Surgery for Fresno Woman," *Ibid.*, October 13, 1954; Claude C. Laval, "Keep Wearing that Cheery Smile," *Fresno Guide*, May 13, 1965.
35. Bobbye Temple, "'Pop' Laval," *Fresno Bee*, October 6, 1974; "Two Who Have Done Much," *Ibid.*, February 26, 1966; Muller, "People Interest Lens Veteran."
36. Draft of "Pop Says" column for *Fresno Guide*, no date, Laval Papers and Correspondence.
37. "Laval Pictures Will Be Shown at City College," *Fresno Bee*, September 19, 1976; "Through the Lens of 'Pop' Laval," *Ibid.*, October 1, 1974; "Singing the Valley's Praises," *Ibid.*, July 6, 1976; Gene Rose, "Fresno Pictorial History," *Ibid.*, October 13, 1974; Rose, "Valley's Pictorial Splendor In A Bicentennial Present," *Ibid.*, July 6, 1976.

# James vs. Marinship: Trouble on the New Black Frontier

Nathan I. Huggins, now a distinguished Harvard historian, was one of 4846 black residents of San Francisco in 1940. He was then in junior high school and remembers "how small a community we were. . . . How self-satisfied everyone was, despite discrimination in almost every line of employment, pervasive restrictive covenants, and powerlessness in city politics." Huggins also remembers "how ambivalent everyone was about the wave of blacks from the South, brought to man new jobs in the war industries. The old [black] residents saw the new as crude, rough and boisterous. They lacked the manners and sense of decorum of San Francisco." But the newcomers made good wages and formed what Huggins calls "the basis of black business in the city." Blacks no longer could be ignored, and "complacency disappeared. Racial tensions rose." Huggins notes that many of the old black residents wished the newcomers "would all go back where they came from."<sup>1</sup> But they stayed and laid the foundations of most black neighborhoods and communities that still exist in the San Francisco region.

The great World War II migration is the most important event in the history of black people in the Bay Area. The region became a new black frontier, the Afro-American population growing from less than 20,000 in 1940 to over 60,000 in 1945. The number of

blacks in San Francisco more than quadrupled during the war, while that of Richmond and Vallejo grew by ten times. By 1945, blacks had replaced Asians as the Bay Area's largest non-white minority and the chief target of prejudice and discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

In some respects, the huge migration was typical of earlier movements of non-whites to California. Like Asians and Mexicans, wartime blacks came to fill a labor shortage. But while previous minorities came as foreign immigrants and were forced into unskilled, low-paid employment, wartime blacks were American citizens recruited to fill high-wage industrial jobs created by the national emergency. About seventy percent of the employed black newcomers worked in one industry—the shipyards. Blacks comprised less than three percent of the region's shipyard labor force in 1942, but that figure rose to seven percent in the following year and to more than ten percent by the end of the war.<sup>3</sup>

Shipyard work was largely in skilled, unionized crafts. Most Bay Area craft unions traditionally had been "lily-white," excluding both Asians and blacks, but during the war the unions suddenly had to face the possibility of large numbers of non-white members. To admit black workers violated long-standing membership rules and traditions, but to refuse to do so, left unions open to charges of the very kind of undemocratic behavior against which America was supposed to be fighting. Moreover, if unions enforced membership restrictions against blacks, they would deprive shipyards of thousands of workers in

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the midst of a national emergency and regional labor shortage.

In spite of their significance, neither the wartime black migration nor the labor conflicts it engendered have received much historical attention. Recent works on California black history have concentrated on the pre-World War II years, and studies produced during the 1940s naturally lack historical perspective.<sup>4</sup> The article presented here seeks to redress this scholarly imbalance by concentrating on the wartime struggle between black workers and the Boilermakers union which resulted in the California Supreme

Court's landmark decision in the case of *James v. Marinship*. The conflict at Marinship was a microcosm of the tensions produced by the great demographic movements of World War II. In ethnic relations, as in so many other areas, the war fundamentally changed American society.

Marinship was one of the "instant" wartime shipyards created by the United States Maritime Commission. The Commission owned the yards but contracted with private companies to build and operate the plants. The first and largest such enterprise in the Bay Area was the giant Kaiser complex in





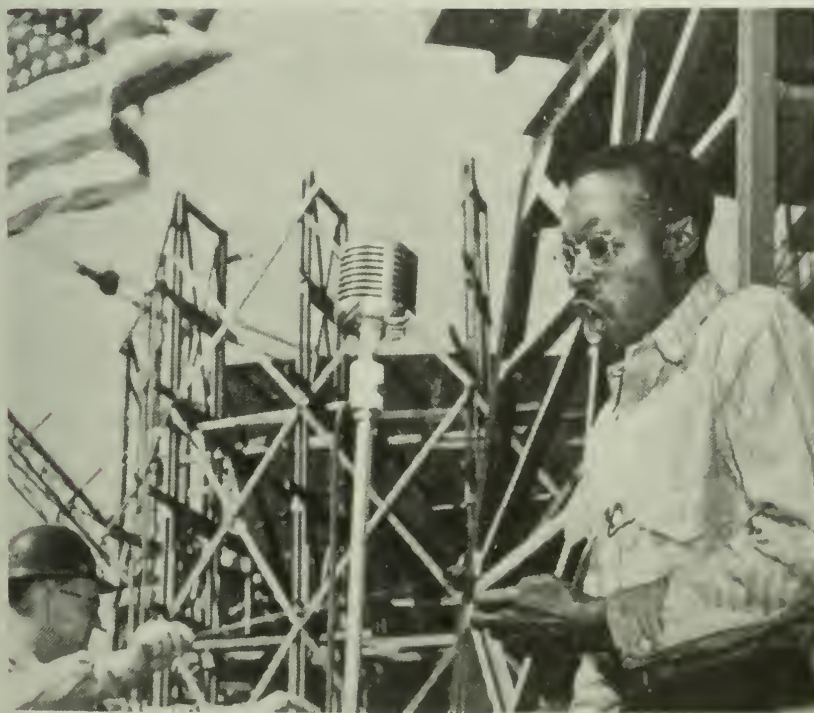
Richmond. W. A. Bechtel Company of San Francisco had previously been involved in several joint business ventures with Kaiser (such as the Boulder Dam project), and had also been contracted to operate Maritime Commission yards, including Calship in southern California. On March 2, 1942 the Commission asked Bechtel to establish a new plant on San Francisco Bay. One week later Kenneth Bechtel was in Washington with a proposal for a yard on the Marin County shoreline of Sausalito, just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. On June 27, less than four months after the contract was awarded, Marinship laid its first keel. Initially, the yard produced "liberty ships," cargo vessels also manufactured by Kaiser. In 1943 Marinship shifted to production of prefabricated tankers, and by late 1944 the yard was launching a ship per week. By fall of 1945, Marinship had built ninety-three vessels.<sup>5</sup>

Bechtel originally estimated that 15,000 workers were needed to keep the yard operating twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In January, 1943 Marinship in fact had about 20,000 employees, and by mid-1944 the workforce had grown to 22,000. Recruiting workers was difficult in the midst of the war with ten million people in the armed forces. Marinship competed for labor with Kaiser and several other Bay Area shipyards and defense contractors. In addition to a few experienced shipbuilders, the company recruited women, teenagers, retired people, "Okies" from rural California and newcomers from all parts of the country. Included among the industrial migrants were blacks, chiefly from states on the western rim of the South (Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma). By mid-1943, blacks were by far Marinship's largest minority group, comprising nearly ten percent of all employees in a multi-ethnic workforce which included some Asians and Latin Americans. The company carried out a massive training effort, taking paternalistic pride in the "in-

doctrination program which taught colored recruits who had never held a responsible job before, as well as those from the so-called underprivileged portions of the country, good work habits."<sup>6</sup>

**T**he massive influx of war workers created a major housing crisis in the Bay Area. Government restrictions limited construction of new private homes, but public housing alleviated some of the demand. Public projects were hastily erected throughout the region, including Marin City, planned in just three days for a 200 acre site immediately north of the Marinship yard. The project was built by Bechtel with Maritime Commission funds and operated by the Marin County Housing Authority. By the end of 1943, Marin City had a population of 5500 Marinship workers and their families.<sup>7</sup>

Under the leadership of Miles C. Dempster, Chief of Project Services, the Housing Authority attempted to make Marin City a model community. Although it was unincorporated territory under county control, an elected City Council was established to advise county authorities. The council published a weekly newspaper, the *Marin Citizen*, and cooperated with USO and the Travelers Aid organization to provide social services. Dempster was proud of his agency's non-discrimination policy, for unlike other Bay Area housing projects, Marin City rented accommodations on a first-come-first-served basis without regard to race. Dempster admitted that this sometimes led to inter-racial conflict and complaints from "prejudiced whites." He responded to the complaints by pointing out that "these black men are Americans. They are needed just as you are—to build ships." The City Council had both black and white members, and, according to Dempster, "gradually the color prejudices lost ground." The *Christian Science*



*Male and female welders, Marinship, 1943. Joseph James (opposite) singing at a Marinship launching.*

*Monitor* reported that Marin City proved that “white people and Negroes can live side by side—and get along.” But a former Housing Authority official admitted that if the white majority were given the power to eject blacks from the project, they probably would do so.<sup>8</sup>

The bulk of Marinship workers were unable to get Marin City or other Marin County accommodations and so commuted to the yard by car, bus or ferry from San Francisco.<sup>9</sup> Private housing was tight for everybody, but particularly for blacks. Many Bay Area neighborhoods had restrictive covenants attached to deeds which prohibited sale or rental of homes to minorities. Residents and real estate firms practiced less formal but equally effective tactics to keep other neighborhoods and communities all-white. As a result, blacks unable to obtain public housing were crowded into those few areas that traditionally were open to minority residents.

Such an area was San Francisco’s Fillmore District, home of most black Marinship workers. Before 1942, the Fillmore had a few hundred black families scattered throughout an essentially multi-ethnic, working class neighborhood. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, several thousand residents of the Fillmore’s “Japantown” were relocated to government camps by presidential order, and this opened up inexpensive housing just as the influx of black workers began. Even so, there was not enough space available. By 1943 about 9000 blacks were crowded into an area previously occupied by 5000 Japanese Americans, and city health officials classified over fifty-five percent of black housing in the Fillmore as substandard.<sup>10</sup> In 1945 the Fillmore was still a multi-ethnic neighborhood, but Lester Granger of the National Urban League warned it could become “another Harlem.” Granger explained that San Franciscans were adopting “the social stereotypes of the East, and they want Negroes to stay in the Fillmore.”<sup>11</sup>

While there were no legal barriers to housing discrimination, federal defense contracts did prohibit job discrimination on the basis of race, religion and national origin. The Kaiser yards initially attempted to hire only whites in skilled trades, but protests from C. L. Dellums, vice president of the Sleeping Car Porters union, and other local black leaders forced the company to reverse that policy. By the time Marinship began hiring in 1942, blacks were being recruited at all Bay Area yards. In mid-1943 the region faced a labor shortage of 50,000 people, and any able-bodied man or woman, white or black, could get a shipyard job. Blacks and women advanced rapidly to journeyman status in welding and other trades but received few promotions to supervisory positions. Within particular job categories, workers received equal pay and benefits, regardless of race or sex.<sup>12</sup>

Bay Area shipyard workers usually labored together peacefully and efficiently, but racist (and sexist) attitudes were certainly present in the yards. Katherine Archibald, a Berkeley student who was employed at the Moore Company in Oakland, believed most of her white co-workers shared a “race hatred that was basic.” When she tried to explain to a woman from Oklahoma that prejudice against blacks was similar to the prevalent “anti-Okie” feeling, the woman accused Archibald of inferring that Oklahomans were “no better than a nigger.” Another worker responded to Archibald’s plea for tolerance with the comment, “Well a nigger may be as good as you are, but sure ain’t as good as me.” But Archibald noted that few whites made such statements directly to blacks. A white welder explained, “if you call him that, [‘nigger’] he’s liable as not to pick up a piece of pipe and break your head with it.” According to Katherine Archibald, such fears usually kept an effective, if uneasy, racial peace at Bay Area shipyards.<sup>13</sup>

If Archibald was right about the prejudices of a



majority of her white co-workers, the chief shipyard union, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers of America, accurately reflected the views of most its members. The Boilermakers represented about seventy percent of the workers at Bay Area shipyards under terms of a Master Agreement between Pacific Coast shipbuilders and the AFL Metal Trades Council. The agreement established a closed shop, specifying that "all workers . . . shall be required to present a clearance card from the appropriate union before being hired." If existing union members could not be found for job openings, new workers could be hired but were still required "to secure a clearance card . . . before starting work."<sup>14</sup> The Boilermakers, then, had used the wartime labor shortage to achieve one of the most important union goals: control of job access. But wartime conditions had also created a multi-ethnic workforce that directly threatened the union's long tradition of white-only membership.

**T**he Boilermakers' racial policy was shared by many, though not all, AFL craft unions. In the Bay Area, the union movement had a heritage of anti-Asian activity, and many unions also discriminated against blacks. In 1910 San Francisco black leaders persuaded a bare majority of the city's labor council to recommend that unions end restrictions against black membership, but little effort was made to enforce the resolution. The fact that employers sometimes used blacks as strikebreakers hardly promoted the cause of racial tolerance. Nevertheless, some AFL affiliates, including the Shipyard Laborers Union representing unskilled maintenance and construction workers at the yards, had long championed nondiscriminatory membership policies. In the 1930s, the new CIO unions, particularly the Longshoremen, not only had black members, but also actively supported civil rights

causes in the Bay Area and elsewhere.<sup>15</sup>

The Boilermakers modified their national racial policies in 1937. Prior to that, blacks had been totally banned from membership, but the union's 1937 convention authorized the establishment of all-black "auxiliaries." As the term implies, the auxiliaries were not full union locals and their members did not have full membership rights. Instead, the new structures were subordinate to regular, white locals which controlled auxiliary policies and treasuries. Auxiliaries had no independent grievance procedures, nor could they hire their own business agents. Auxiliary members had no vote on local union matters and no representation at national conventions. They also received smaller union insurance benefits than white members.<sup>16</sup>

Bay Area Boilermaker locals avoided direct confrontations over the issue of auxiliary membership during the first year of the war simply by issuing clearances to black shipyard workers without requiring them to join the union or pay dues. But by February, 1943 the black segment of the workforce was too large to ignore. East Bay locals formed auxiliaries and required blacks to join and pay dues equal to those paid by whites as a condition of employment. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People filed a complaint against this policy with the National Labor Relations Board, but while the NLRB criticized the auxiliary membership status, it did not ban it outright. Meanwhile, most black workers at Kaiser and other East Bay yards apparently paid their auxiliary dues. According to the NAACP magazine *Crisis*, the black worker "knew jim crow, segregation and second-class citizenship when he saw it," but he paid his dues anyway, "much the same manner as he took a rear seat on a bus in Memphis. . . . He regarded the payments as a necessary bribe for the privilege of working at a job that paid more than he ever dreamed."<sup>17</sup>



*Marin City residents, 1943. Below,  
Marin City as it appeared in 1944.*





On the west side of the bay, Boilermakers Local 6, with jurisdiction over the Bethlehem and Western Pipe yards in San Francisco as well as Marinship in Sausalito, chartered Auxiliary A-41 on August 14, 1943. The local announced that henceforth black workers must join and pay dues to the auxiliary in order to receive their union work clearance.<sup>18</sup> The announcement provoked organized opposition by the San Francisco Committee Against Segregation and Discrimination made up of several local blacks and led by Joseph James. James, in his early thirties at the time, grew up on the east coast, studied music at Boston University and pursued a promising singing career in New York. He came to San Francisco in 1939 to appear in the "Swing Mikado" at the Treasure Island Exposition and settled in the Fillmore after the fair closed. He was hired at Marinship in 1942, and in two months advanced from welder's helper to journeyman, normally a six month process. By mid-1943 James was a member of a "flying squad" of expert welders used for special jobs. He was also an active member of the NAACP, a recognized black spokesman at the yard, and, with all this, still managed to keep up his singing career. His performances were a staple at Marinship launchings and ceremonies.<sup>19</sup>

On August 21, 1943, just a week after the establishment of Auxiliary A-41, the company employee magazine, the *Marin-er*, devoted much of its issue to a discussion of race relations at Marinship. Management obviously was concerned about racial tensions, particularly following major race riots in Detroit, Los Angeles and other American cities earlier that summer. The special issue of the magazine was prepared with assistance of a "Negro Advisory Board" headed by Joe James. James also wrote the lead article, "Marinship Negroes Speak to Their Fellow Workers," calling on his readers "to turn our hatred, instead of against each other, against the forces of fascism." An editorial condemned discrimination and pro-

claimed that the war was being fought "to prove for all time the dignity and rights of the individual man regardless of race, creed or color."<sup>20</sup>

**M**arinship soon found itself in the middle of a struggle to establish those very principles in the Boilermakers Union. After three months, at least half of the approximately 1100 blacks in jobs under Boilermaker jurisdiction at Marinship still refused to join Auxiliary A-41. On November 24, 1943 the union ordered management to fire 430 black workers unless they paid their auxiliary dues in twenty-four hours and warned an additional 150 workers that they soon faced similar treatment.<sup>21</sup> That evening about 350 people met in San Francisco under the aegis of the Committee Against Segregation and Discrimination to decide on an appropriate response. Joe James told the meeting that their fight was not to destroy the Boilermakers but to strengthen the union by insisting that blacks be granted full and equal membership rights. C. L. Dellums reiterated the point, and the participants voted unanimously to continue boycotting the auxiliary.<sup>22</sup>

On Friday, November 26 about thirty blacks on the afternoon shift were refused permission to work, the company explaining that the union had withdrawn their work clearances. Throughout the ensuing controversy, Marinship insisted it was simply an innocent bystander, required to enforce its collective bargaining contract in a dispute between black workers and the union. However, by agreeing to dismiss blacks, the company accepted the legality of the union action. Legalisms aside, Marinship must have feared that resisting the Boilermakers' wishes might result in a strike that would interrupt production.

More workers were barred at the beginning of the graveyard shift on November 26, and by Saturday





morning, November 27, hundreds of black men and women had gathered at Gate 3 of the yard to protest the lay-offs. Eventually, the crowd grew to about 800 and was described by the *San Rafael Daily Independent* as "Marin's greatest labor demonstration and most critical situation to arise since the San Francisco 'general strike' in the summer of 1934." Sheriff's deputies and Highway Patrolmen arrived with nightsticks and tear gas, "ready for any emergency." But two black deputies from Marin City assured the County Sheriff they could keep order, and, reported the *Independent*, they "succeeded admirably." Joe James and three other black committee members, Preston Stallinger, Edward Anderson and Eugene Small, met with company officials and then addressed the crowd with divided counsel. James, Stallinger and Anderson urged those who still had union clearance to return to their jobs while continuing to boycott the auxiliary. But Small called on blacks "to stand pat and not return to work" until they had won full union membership.<sup>23</sup>

How many workers took Small's advice is a matter of dispute. The *San Francisco Examiner* reported that 1500 walked off their jobs, but that figure is larger than the total number of Marinship blacks in jobs under Boilermaker jurisdiction. The *American Labor Citizen*, voice of the Bay Area Metal Trades Council, assured its readers that the trouble was caused by a handful of malcontents and that a "vast majority of Negro workers" remained on the job. Whatever the number of strikers, it concerned Admiral Emory S. Land of the Maritime Commission. Initially, Land urged workers to join the auxiliary under protest, but when this plea failed, the admiral asked the company to suspend the lay-offs. California Attorney General Robert Kenny made a similar request, pointing out that if ship production slowed, "more American boys are going to die, both white American boys and black American boys."<sup>24</sup> However, the company again insisted that under its collective bargaining agreement it was obligated to bar workers without union clearance.

Local 6 business agent Ed Rainbow argued that the closed shop agreement was recognized by the federal government and that blacks understood Boilermaker policy when they took shipyard jobs. The *Labor Citizen* charged that black workers who "laid down their tools" had caused all the trouble, and the paper saw nothing wrong with blacks joining auxiliaries "composed of their own people." Both Rainbow and the Metal Trades organ claimed that Local 6 had no choice in the matter, since it was simply following national union policy.<sup>25</sup> In at least one previous instance, however, Rainbow had bent national rules. In 1942 he refused clearance for six white women welders at Marinship, citing male-only provisions of the Boilermaker constitution. One woman became "very impolite and abrupt," and Rainbow eventually reconsidered. Thousands of white women were later accepted as full Local 6 members, and the woman who had protested so vociferously became a union shop steward. Rainbow was quoted saying he would "rather get hit by a baseball bat than to become embroiled with a pack of women who wanted to work."<sup>26</sup>

The business agent probably soon had similar feelings about Joe James and his supporters. By Sunday, November 28, 160 blacks, including James, lost their work clearances, and that evening about 1000 people attended a committee meeting in a Fillmore District church. Eugene Small again called for a labor boycott, telling the *Independent* that blacks were considering taking jobs "not involving union membership." But James and other leaders argued the fight was against segregation, not trade unions. Eventually, the meeting approved legal action. The next morning, committee attorneys filed suit in Federal District Court on behalf of James and seventeen other black workers, asking reinstatement by Marinship and \$115,000 damages from the Boilermakers. Judge Paul St. Sure issued a temporary restraining order, suspending the

lay-offs pending formal hearing of the suit.<sup>27</sup>

The company announced it would halt further lay-offs but refused to re-hire the 160 idle workers until they received union clearance. It took another court order to achieve this, and even then, Local 6 held out until Friday, December 3. On that morning, "a crowd of waiting Negro workers" were at union headquarters in San Francisco. They gathered "before the grilled windows where permits are issued," and finally, after about four hours, "the little white slips of paper started to come through." "Now we can get back to work," Joe James announced, and during the weekend, committee sound trucks toured the Fillmore and Marin City urging blacks to return to their jobs.<sup>28</sup>

The formal hearing occurred on December 12 in a courtroom crowded with black spectators. Committee attorneys George Anderson and Herbert Ressler were accompanied by NAACP Chief Counsel Thurgood Marshall and Bartley Crum of the National Lawyers Guild. Anderson argued that if blacks could be forced into separate auxiliaries, so could American Indians like Ed Rainbow, Irish Americans (Judge Michael Roche) or Armenian Americans (defense attorney Charles Janigian). But the union refused to respond to this point, contending instead that federal courts had no jurisdiction and that the case should be dismissed. Judge Roche referred the dismissal motion to a three-judge panel, and until the panel made its decision, the temporary restraining order remained in force. On January 6, 1944 the judges announced they were granting the union's motion and dismissing the case. "The plaintiff's action," the court explained, "does not arise out of the federal constitution or any federal statutes."<sup>29</sup>

The dismissal automatically ended the restraining

order, and Local 6 announced it would withdraw union clearance for workers who had not paid auxiliary dues by Friday, January 14. But on that day committee attorneys returned to court, this time before Marin Superior Judge Edward I. Butler of San Rafael. The committee now based its suit on state rather than federal law, and Judge Butler issued another temporary order restraining the lay-offs. The order was served just fifteen minutes before a work shift was to change at Marinship. The company already had removed black workers' time cards from the rack, but clerks hurriedly replaced the cards, and the shift changed without incident.<sup>30</sup>

While the case was being argued in court, the Boilermakers' auxiliary policy also was being investigated by the President's Fair Employment Practices Commission. President Roosevelt established FEPC in the summer of 1941 in response to a plan by a group of prominent blacks, led by Sleeping Car Porters Union head A. Philip Randolph, to stage a massive march on Washington to protest discrimination in defense employment and the federal government. Only after Roosevelt agreed to form a federal commission to monitor enforcement of non-discrimination policies in federal contracts and government civil service did Randolph call off the march. The President's order allowed FEPC to hold hearings, write reports and issue orders and recommendations. But the commission had no independent authority to punish wrong-doers either by criminal, civil or administrative penalties or by canceling contracts.<sup>31</sup>

**I**n mid-November, 1943, the commission held hearings in Portland and Los Angeles to investigate complaints about Boilermaker auxiliaries by black workers in Pacific Northwest and southern California shipyards. Yard operators, including Kaiser and

Bechtel, argued they were caught in the middle of a fight between blacks and the union. The Boilermakers simply refused to testify before the commission. During the Marinship strike later that month, FEPC Chairman Malcolm Ross asked union and management to delay lay-offs until the commission issued its report. Nothing came of Ross' request, and on December 14, 1943 FEPC announced a decision that was a blow to the union cause. The Boilermakers were ordered to "eliminate all membership practices which discriminate against workers because of race or color," and five employers, including Bechtel's Calship, were prohibited from enforcing closed shop provisions which contributed to such discrimination. However, the employers appealed the decision, and the appeal procedure, necessitating new briefs and hearings, took a year to complete. In the meantime, the commission suspended its order.<sup>32</sup>

Malcolm Ross hoped he could persuade the Boilermakers to change their membership policies at the union's International Convention, scheduled for the end of January, 1944 in Kansas City. This also was the hope of those attending a mass meeting in Oakland on January 23. C. L. Dellums, Joe James and committee attorney George Anderson were among the speakers at the Oakland gathering. Business agents for the Stage Riggers and Pile Drivers described their unions' open membership rules, and Ray Stewart, a white Boilermaker, contended that "abolishing auxiliaries will benefit the union as much as the Negro." Apparently, Stewart spoke for at least some of his white co-workers. East Bay Boilermakers Local 681 had passed a resolution requesting the convention to allow full membership "without regard to race, color, creed, national origin or sex." Of six thousand signatures gathered at Bay Area shipyards in support of the resolution, about seventy-five percent came from white workers.<sup>33</sup>

The convention received a similar appeal from





*Ed Rainbow, Local 6 business agent and Eugene Small (below) in 1943. Both photos are reproduced from the Marin-cr.*



twenty-two prominent black citizens. AFL President William Green criticized job discrimination in general terms from the convention floor, and delegates heard much the same thing from President Roosevelt via telegram.<sup>34</sup> But incoming Boilermaker President Charles MacGowan already had made his position clear. "One of the greatest causes contributing to the failure of the Negro to advance farther," MacGowan explained, "is the professional Negro."<sup>35</sup> MacGowan had invited Malcolm Ross to the convention, and the FEPC chairman described his experiences in Kansas City with something less than enthusiasm: "So it happened that a bureaucrat, minced up into little pieces, was served during a several hour ceremony to the International officers and heads of lodges as a hors d'oeuvre to whet appetites for the main racial dish."<sup>36</sup>

Much the same thing happened to Local 681's resolution. In the end, the convention liberalized membership rules only to the extent that auxiliaries were allowed to elect delegates to future conventions and to local metal trades councils. In addition, blacks henceforth would receive equal union insurance benefits. But auxiliaries remained something less than full union locals and blacks something less than full union members.<sup>37</sup> The convention did break precedent by allowing a black auxiliary leader, William Smith from Richmond, to address the delegates. Smith welcomed the rule changes and promised whites "we will do our best to be worthy of your trust." That statement must have reinforced President MacGowan's conviction that the auxiliary problem was "not within the membership but with professional agitation attempting to make a cause where none exists."<sup>38</sup>

This was not the view of Judge Butler of the Marin Superior Court. On February 17, 1944 Butler announced his decision in what now was known as the case of *James v. Marinship*. Butler ruled that the Boilermakers' policy of "discriminating against and segregating Negroes into auxiliaries is contrary to

public policy of the state of California," and he prohibited the union from requiring blacks to join auxiliaries as a condition of employment. The judge also barred Marinship from laying off workers who refused to pay auxiliary dues. As far as Butler was concerned, if the Boilermakers wished to retain closed shop privileges, they must "admit Negroes as members on the same terms and conditions as white persons."<sup>39</sup>

Both union and management appealed this decision to the California Supreme Court, and it took nearly a year for the state's highest court to decide the case. In the meantime, the Boilermakers did not accept blacks as full members, but the union could not require auxiliary membership as a condition of employment at Marinship. Judge Butler's decision did not apply to other yards, but during 1944, cases similar to the Marinship suit were brought in various Bay Area courts. Continued attempts by FEPC Chairman Ross to achieve a voluntary settlement failed, so the matter was not resolved until the State Supreme Court announced its final decision on January 2, 1945.

The court's unanimous opinion, written by Chief Justice Phil Gibson, was a decisive defeat for the Boilermakers. The union had argued that it was not guilty of discrimination, since blacks were paid equal wages and had equal, though separate, status in auxiliaries. The justices did not dispute the contention of equal wages, but found that it was "readily apparent that the membership offered to Negroes is discriminatory and unequal." The union also contended the case was moot because various federal agencies, particularly the FEPC, were investigating the matter. The court responded that since the commission's powers were limited, "it is not a complete or adequate administrative remedy."<sup>40</sup>



Joseph James, 1942

The Supreme Court agreed with Judge Butler that the auxiliary practice violated the California statute that held racial discrimination "contrary to public policy." The union had argued that this statute applied only to discrimination in public places and services, not to voluntary associations such as labor organizations. But Gibson concluded that when such an organization achieves a closed shop contract controlling access to labor, it affects an individual's "fundamental right to work for a living" and thus the union occupies a "quasi-public position." The court explained that it was not outlawing the concept of closed shop *per se*, but that "an arbitrarily closed union is incompatible with a closed shop."<sup>44</sup>

The court also refused to let management off the hook. Marinship asserted that it was simply enforcing terms of a federally-approved labor contract and could not be held responsible for union discrimination. But Justice Gibson pointed out that the company had "full knowledge of the dispute and at least indirectly assisted the union in carrying out discrimination." By the same token, Local 6 could not argue that it only enforced national union policies over which it had no control. "The true rule is, of course, that the agent is liable for his acts."<sup>42</sup>

The San Francisco *Chronicle* hailed the decision as confirmation of the principle of "no representation, no dues." The *Marin Citizen* said the ruling "should be welcomed by every believer in genuine trade unionism," while the Communist *People's World* emphasized that the court had outlawed discrimination, not the closed shop. Joe James made the same point, contending that his supporters had waged the battle "strictly on a pro-union basis." By this time, James had been elected president of the San Francisco NAACP branch and proclaimed that the organization was "in the forefront of every fight against open shop proposals."<sup>43</sup>

James also thanked white workers who had sup-



ported his cause. He explained that both the NAACP and the Committee Against Segregation and Discrimination were inter-racial groups, and that many whites had signed petitions, donated money and discussed the issues with their fellow workers. At Moore shipyard, Katherine Archibald reported that the union's initial 1943 victory in federal court "aroused the rejoicing of several of my [white] colleagues." But the final decision of the State Supreme Court in 1945 gave blacks "status as a people in the



eyes of their white companions." There might be mutterings of discontent, "but the decision was respected and the conviction grew that the law at least . . . was on the side of the black man." One white worker conceded, "I guess we can't keep hold of all the jobs."<sup>44</sup>

A few days before the court decision was announced, the FEPC released its final ruling on the appeals of the five shipyard cases in southern California and the Pacific Northwest. As expected, the commission reaffirmed its order of a year earlier that black workers could not be fired or denied employment for refusing to pay auxiliary dues. During the trial of the James case, commission chairman Ross found it ironic that union and management argued that the case was moot since it was being handled by FEPC. This, said Ross, was "a solemn plea, coming from parties who had informed FEPC that it had no authority and could go jump in the lake." Ross believed the court decision "went far beyond" the commission ruling and "knocked the pins from under the defense of the shipyards and the Boilermakers."<sup>45</sup>

The union announced it would obey the decision and abolish its California auxiliaries. But in their place, the Boilermakers intended to form "separate but equal" local lodges. Blacks would be given full membership rights but would be required to join all-black locals. However, black Boilermakers could only transfer to black locals, thus limiting their job mobility within the union. Whether this would have passed the judicial test will never be known, since the union made serious efforts to establish "separate but equal" locals for only a short time. A 1948 study found that all Boilermaker lodges in the Bay Area were racially integrated.<sup>46</sup>

*James v. Marinship*, then, produced important changes in Boilermaker membership practices. Ironically, very few blacks were ultimately able to take

advantage of that fact. In 1944, Local 6 had 36,000 members, including about 3000 blacks theoretically in segregated auxiliaries. In 1948 the local was racially integrated but had only 1800 members of whom just 150 were black.<sup>47</sup> Even by the time of the Supreme Court decision, work was declining in Bay Area shipyards. The Allies clearly were winning the war, and the government began cutting back contracts. Between January, 1944 and January, 1945, total Bay Area shipyard employment fell from about 240,000 to 200,000. Black employment in the yards continued to increase slightly during that year, (from 24,000 to 26,000), but after January, 1945, the black workforce also rapidly declined. It was 20,000 in July, 12,000 in September and an "insignificant number" by mid-1946.<sup>48</sup>

At Marinship total employment in April, 1945 was about half of what it had been a year before. In May, Marin City housing was opened to non-Marinship workers for the first time. Company fortunes seemed to improve with the signing of new contracts to build barges for the invasion of Japan, but the Japanese surrender in August ended work on that project. The Maritime Commission asked Bechtel to continue running the yard, but the company refused, explaining that in peacetime it would not operate a government enterprise "in competition with privately-owned plants." Bechtel also declined to buy the yard, so on May 16, 1946 Marinship formally closed. Most significant work had ended several months earlier.<sup>49</sup>

The meaning of the decline in Bay Area shipbuilding for the black workforce is graphically described in Cy Record's story, "Willie Stokes at the Golden Gate," published in 1949. Willie came to the Bay Area from Arkansas during the war and got a job as a welder at Kaiser, ultimately earning \$10 a day. After the war, he was laid off, and by June 1946 was fortunate to be making \$6.40 a day as an un-

skilled laborer. A year later he was unemployed. Stokes found it "funny almost. One day you are an essential worker in a vital industry (they said that in speeches every time they launched a ship) and the next you were a surplus unskilled laborer, essential to no one." One sympathetic employer explained, "in most cases your wartime experiences will mean very little. During the war, wage costs weren't important and the system of classification by skills was all out of whack . . . the government was footing the bill." Now businesses were only hiring workers with high school diplomas, a credential Willie Stokes did not possess. In fact, a 1950 study found that only about twenty percent of black wartime migrants to the Bay Area over twenty-five years old had graduated from high school; half had not even finished the eighth grade.<sup>50</sup>

It was a classic case of "last hired, first fired." During the war, about seventy-five percent of black heads of households in San Francisco were classified as skilled industrial workers, the great majority in the shipyards. By 1948 only about twenty-five percent of black workers were still in industrial jobs, while over half were employed as unskilled laborers or service workers. More than fifteen percent of Bay Area black men were unemployed in 1948, nearly three times the state-wide rate for all persons. Only in government and clerical jobs had blacks managed to hold their wartime vocational gains, but the number of people in these categories was small. The United States Department of Employment noted that "as long as Negroes are commonly regarded as marginal labor, they will suffer very heavy unemployment when sufficient white labor is available."<sup>51</sup>

In this situation, it was hardly surprising that some blacks left the Bay Area after the war, including Joe James who returned to New York to pursue his singing career. Yet an estimated eighty-five percent of the wartime migrants stayed, their numbers

increased by their newborn children and by new, post-war migrations from the South. By 1950 San Francisco's black population had grown to over 40,000, by 1960 to nearly 75,000. As Lester Granger had warned, much of the Fillmore became a black "ghetto" as did Marin City, surrounded by some of the most prosperous white suburbs in America.<sup>52</sup>

**B**ack in 1945 Joe James believed he had identified a pattern in California's treatment of minority migrants: "we need them, we use them, when we are through with them, we banish them."<sup>53</sup> Wartime blacks were needed and used, but not banished. Thousands of Willie Stokeses still live in the Bay Area, as do their children and grandchildren. They, along with growing numbers of Latinos and Asians, may soon give California a "Third World" population majority. In San Francisco many of the old, white craft unions have declined along with the industries they serve. The largest union in the city today is the Hotel and Restaurant Workers, and its members are mostly of Asian, Afro-American and Latin American origin.

The problems of black poverty, unemployment and lack of economic opportunity identified after World War II have become chronic for a large portion of the region's non-white population. Of course, this situation is by no means unique to the Bay Area. But the area's experience is unusual in that the beginnings of its large black population are so directly tied to the short-term boom in a single industry. As long as the wartime shipyards operated at or near capacity, blacks had access to well-paying jobs. In the midst of the national emergency and regional labor shortage, they even won the legal principle of equal membership in exclusive craft unions. But the precipitous decline of the shipyards after the war was an eco-

conomic disaster from which the region's black population has never fully recovered. Even the protests, civil rights legislation and anti-poverty measures of the 1960s did not produce economic opportunity comparable to World War II.

Nathan I. Huggins is correct when he says that wartime migration created the Bay Area's first black bourgeoisie, for only with the migration was there enough population to support black lawyers, doctors, teachers and entrepreneurs. But Douglas Daniels makes the equally important point that the war also created the region's first black proletariat.<sup>54</sup> During the 1940s, these workers won battles that established important legal principles, but they have yet to win an equitable share of the region's wealth and power.

All of the photographs are courtesy of the Sausalito Historical Society.

## Notes

1. Nathan I. Huggins, "Foreword," in Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites: A Social and Cultural History of Black San Francisco* (Philadelphia, 1980), xiv-xv.
2. Joseph James, "Profiles, San Francisco," *Journal of Educational Sociology* (November, 1945), 168; Neil Wynn, *Afro-Americans and the Second World War* (London, 1976), 61; Cy Record, "Willie Stokes at the Golden Gate," *Crisis* (June, 1949), 176; Charles Johnson, *Negro War Workers in San Francisco, a Local Self-Survey* (San Francisco, 1944), 2-4.
3. Johnson, "Negro War Workers," 63; Record, "Willie Stokes," 177.
4. One recent work that does deal with the migration is Edward France, *Some Aspects of the Migration of the Negro to the San Francisco Bay Area Since 1940* (San Francisco, 1974). For recent works dealing with the pre-war black experience see, Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites*; Rudolph Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California* (New Haven, 1977) and Lawrence de Graaf, "City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto," *Pacific Historical Review* (August, 1970), 323-352. Best of the 1940s studies are, Johnson, *Negro War Worker*; Record, "Willie Stokes," and James, "Profiles."
5. Richard Finnie, *Marinship: the History of a Wartime Shipyard* (San Francisco, 1947), 1-7; Marinship Corporation, *Marinship* (Sausalito, 1944), 20; *Sausalito News*, March 19, 1942.
6. Finnie, *Marinship*, 39-54; Davis McEntire and Julia R. Tamopol, "Postwar Status of Negro Workers in the San Francisco Area," *Monthly Labor Review* (June, 1950), 613; James, "Profiles," 168.
7. Finnie, *Marinship*, 62-68; Persis White and Sarah Hayne, "Marin City, a Social Problem to Marin County," in Mills College, *Immigration and Race Problems* (Oakland, 1954), 318-334.
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9. Finnie, *Marinship*, 69.
10. Johnson, *Negro War Workers*, 20-30; James, "Profiles," 168-173; Horace Clayton, "New Problem for the West Coast," *Chicago Sun*, October 14, 1943.
11. *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 19, 1945.
12. C. L. Dellums, *International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Civil Rights Leader*, oral history, Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library (Berkeley, 1973), 97-99; James, "Profiles," 169; Johnson, *Negro War Workers*, 63; France, *Some Aspects*, 67-68.
13. Katherine Archibald, *Wartime Shipyard, a Study in Social Disunity*, (Berkeley, 1947), 59-74.
14. *Master Agreement Between the Pacific Coast Shipbuilders and the Metal Trades Department, AFL*, (Seattle, 1941), 4-6.
15. Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites*, 31-42; Robert Knight, *Industrial Relations in the San Francisco Bay Area 1910-1918* (Berkeley, 1960), 213, 303, 315, 339, 361; James, "Profiles," 169; Johnson, *Negro War Workers*, 18, 70.
16. Thurgood Marshall, "Negro Status in the Boilermakers Union," *Crisis* (March, 1944), 77; Herbert Northrup, *Organized Labor and the Negro* (New York, 1944), 213-214; Ray Marshall, *The Negro Worker* (New York, 1967), 61.
17. Record, "Willie Stokes," 177; Johnson, *Negro War Workers*, 71; Ray Marshall, *Negro Worker*, 62.
18. *James v. Marinship*, 25 Cal., 2nd, 726 (1945); Johnson, *Negro War Workers*, 71.
19. *Marin-er* (October 16, 1942), 1; (August 21, 1943), 4; *American Labor Citizen*, December 6, 1943; *People's World*, January 6, 1945.
20. *Marin-er*, (August 21, 1943), 4-6.
21. *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *People's World*, November 24, 1943.



22. *People's World, Chronicle*, November 25, 1943.
23. *San Rafael Daily Independent*, November 27, 1943; *Chronicle, Examiner*, November 28, 1943.
24. *Chronicle, Examiner*, November 28, 1943; *American Labor Citizen*, December 6, 1943.
25. *American Labor Citizen*, Dec. 6, 1943; *People's World*, November 30, 1943.
26. Finnie, *Marinship*, 213-214.
27. *Daily Independent*, November 29, 30, 1943; *People's World, Chronicle*, November 30, 1943; *Sausalito News*, December 2, 1943.
28. *Daily Independent, Chronicle, Marin Citizen*, December 3, 1943; *People's World*, December 4, 1943.
29. *Daily Independent*, December 13, 14, 1943, January 6, 1944; *People's World*, December 14, 15, 1943, January 7, 1944; *Marin Citizen*, December 17, 1943, January 7, 1944.
30. *Daily Independent*, January 12, 14, 1944; *People's World*, January 13, 15, 1944; *Marin Citizen*, January 21, 1944.
31. For background on FEPC see, Robert Weaver, *Negro Labor: a National Problem* (New York, 1946); 131-152; Herbert Garfinkel, *When Negroes March* (Glencoe, Ill., 1959), 38-75; Richard Dalfiume, *Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts* (Columbia, Mo., 1969), 115-123; Neil Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War*, (London, 1976), 38-48.
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33. *People's World*, January 17, 20, 25, 27, 1944; *California Eagle*, January 20, 27, 1944.
34. *People's World*, February 8, 9, 14, 1944.
35. *Boilermakers Journal*, (November, 1943), 295.
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38. *People's World*, February 14, 1944; *American Labor Citizen*, March 27, 1944.
39. *Chronicle, Marin Citizen*, February 18, 1944; *People's World*, February 18, 19, 1944; *California Eagle*, February 24, 1944.
40. *James v. Marinship*, 737, 744-745.
41. *Ibid.*, 731-740.
42. *Ibid.*, 742, 745. The decision also settled the similar cases affecting other Bay Area yards instituted after Judge Butler's ruling.
43. *Chronicle*, January 3, 4, 1945; *Marin Citizen*, January 5, 1945; *California Eagle*, January 4, 1945; *People's World*, January 3, 4, 5, 6, 1945.
44. Archibald, *Wartime Shipyard*, 92, 96-97; *People's World*, January 12, 1945.
45. Ross, *All Manner of Men*, 150-151; FEPC, "Decision on Re-hearing," 1-11; *Final Report*, 21.
46. Fred Stripp, "The Relationships of the San Francisco Bay Area Negro-American Worker With the Labor Unions Affiliated With the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations," Th.D. Thesis, Pacific School of Religion, (Berkeley, 1948), 164-169; Weaver, *Negro Labor*, 230.
47. Stripp, "Relationships," 166.
48. Record, "Willie Stokes," 177.
49. *Marin Citizen*, March 30, May 4, 1945; Finnie, *Marinship*, 361-371.
50. Record, "Willie Stokes," 175-179; McEntire and Tarnopol, "Post-War Status," 613.
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52. *Ibid.*, 187; *Chronicle*, September 19, 1945, June 16, November 17, 1947, August 29, 1948; Tom Rose and John Kirich, *The San Francisco Non-White Population 1950-1960* San Francisco, n.d.), 3-4; White and Hayne, "Marin City;" Ottolo Krebs, "The Post-War Negro in San Francisco," in *American Communities*, v. 2 (Mills College, Oakland, 1949), 549-586.
53. James, "Profiles," 176.
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## Edward D. Baker and California's First Republican Campaign

By 1854 party policies regarding the slavery issue had caused many unhappy Whigs and Democrats across the United States to seek new political affiliations. Consequently, some of these disenchanted politicians, in hand with party rank-and-file, had shifted their allegiance to the fledgling American Party.<sup>1</sup> Other partyless souls, repelled by the Know-Nothings' exclusionist doctrine, sought political ties that would allow them to express their anti-slavery sentiments. That year these former Whigs and Democrats coalesced on the slavery issue and formed a new political organization sectional in composition and belief, the Republican Party.

From its midwestern birthplace in 1854, the Republican Party promoted a platform opposed to slavery's expansion into the territories. Increasing its membership yearly, the party flourished in the anti-slave North; and by 1856 Californians witnessed the planting of the Republican seed in their state.

Founded in March 1856, the California Republican Party began humbly. Among its few early members was Cornelius Cole, a middle-aged former New Yorker who had studied law in the office of a leading anti-slavery advocate, William H. Seward.<sup>2</sup> In his memoirs Cole recalled the party's lackluster early days in California:

In Sacramento, where I resided, the party, at its inception, was extremely limited in numbers. No record, I venture to say, can be found of a political organization starting out with fewer adherents. There were C. P. Huntington, Mark Hopkins, Leland Stanford, Edwin B. and Charles Crocker, all personal as well as political friends of mine. There were not, for some time, besides these, as many as could be counted on one's fingers.<sup>3</sup>

Despite its small membership the party held its

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first mass meeting only six weeks after its inception. At that Sacramento rally, openly hostile Democrats and Whigs in the audience created such a loud disturbance that the Republican speaker could not be heard. Pleas for quiet went unheeded, and the meeting soon broke up, in reality before it had commenced.<sup>4</sup>

Undaunted by this inauspicious beginning, California Republicans held their first state convention eleven days later, on April 30, in Sacramento's Congregational Church. Only thirteen of the state's forty counties were represented, however, and of the 125 delegates present sixty-five were from San Francisco or Sacramento.<sup>5</sup> The minimal attendance did not prevent the delegates from accomplishing the business at hand. They adopted as a fundamental party principle a resolution forbidding slavery in all federal territories and likewise proposed the immediate construction of a national railroad that would connect the eastern United States with San Francisco Bay.<sup>6</sup>

Significantly, the gathering attracted local newspaper coverage. On May 2, the *Sacramento Daily Union*, aware of the city's ongoing Republican convention, printed a timely analysis of the neophyte organization:

But a new experiment is springing up, not entirely based on incipient Whiggery, but on sectionalism. It is plain, even at this early date, that it must become the party of the state opposed to Democracy—of which it possesses not an element as it is a contemner of the Confederacy.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, Cornelius Cole dutifully reported the California party's brief history and assessed its future in letters to two associates. To E.D. Morgan of New York Cole wrote on May 3:

The Republican party in this state was taken [born] in this place [Sacramento] on the 8th of March & though small at first it has already assumed manly proportions & is increasing rapidly.



*The ex-Whig and eloquent advocate of Republicanism, Edward D. Baker.*



Both the other parties (if the American party may yet be said to have an existence, it may resuscitate) are divided into northern and southern wings and the tendency of our organization & our hope is to effect a divorce of those elements.<sup>8</sup>

With the new party's national nominating convention scheduled for June, Cole, in the same letter, reported that

the clear choice of the Republicans of California for President is . . . Wm. Seward. Yet our delegates [to the Philadelphia convention] will not urge the nomination of the Gentleman unless his election would be quite certain.<sup>9</sup>

That same day Cole also wrote optimistically to his friend Seward:

We [Republicans] have held our state convention. . . . The movement has found encouragement quite beyond expectation. We have all the elements here of a powerful opposition to slavery aggression. The only difficulty is in combining and concentrating them, and this we hope to do under the Republican flag. . . .<sup>10</sup>

In June 1856 Republican delegates, including those from California, met in Philadelphia and selected the soldier-explorer John C. Fremont as their White House hopeful.<sup>11</sup> That Fremont gained the nomination because of his availability as a candidate, and not because of any demonstrated personal fitness for the high office, showed that Republican leaders did not expect a November victory.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, most Republicans were enthused at the mere prospect of having a bona fide presidential nominee in the campaign. California party members reacted similarly.

Several weeks after the Philadelphia convention, news reached California of the Fremont candidacy. The California Republican organization quickly adopted the campaign slogan "Freedom, Fremont and Railroad." In turn, on August 15, 1856, Cornelius Cole founded the *Daily California Times* in his small office at 52 K Street.<sup>13</sup> Destined to become the state's Republican campaign organ, the *Times* proudly proclaimed it would "advocate the speedy



*Baker's stump tour for Frémont in 1856 took him to Downieville and other such Mother Lode mining settlements.*

construction of the Pacific Railway, sustain the policy of the Republican Party and consequently support John C. Fremont for President."<sup>14</sup> In its third issue the paper reported: "Col. E. D. Baker: We hear it announced on pretty good authority that this gentleman, now in this city, has announced his intention to support Fremont and the Pacific Railroad in the coming contest."<sup>15</sup>

Colonel Edward Dickinson Baker was a forty-one year old English-born Mexican War veteran and former Congressman from Illinois who had come to California in 1852. On arriving he established a successful law practice and simultaneously pursued his political interests in San Francisco. Regarded as one of the era's greatest public speakers, Baker lent his oratorical skill to the Whig Party and following its demise to the new Republican organization. In June 1856, Baker unhappily had departed San Francisco, having fought a five month legal and verbal battle with much of the city's pro-vigilante populace. Baker's defense of a known gambler in a murder trial and subsequent outspoken criticism of vigilante-inspired mob rule had caused a majority of the citizenry to look unfavorably on the previously popular attorney-politician.<sup>16</sup>

By the time he arrived in Sacramento that summer Baker's feelings regarding San Francisco's vigilantes and their outlaw courts remained unchanged. Politically, however, he had undergone a metamorphosis. Realizing that the Whig Party had breathed its last, Baker found Republican principles compatible and emerged, as Cole's paper announced, a Republican supporter. Though the distinguished Colonel was not among the party's founders, years later Cole noted Baker's vital role during the state party's infancy:

From an early stage in the new party's existence in California it was so fortunate to have in its ranks two of the most powerful orators this country has ever pro-

duced, Frederick P. Tracy and Edw. D. Baker. . . . The two did more than any others towards giving a character and strength to the party.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, Cole described Baker as the man who contributed most to the anti-slavery movement in California. Said Cole to an interviewer, "Baker was really the father of the Republican Party in this state."<sup>18</sup>

Shortly after his arrival in Sacramento, Baker became involved actively in the Fremont campaign. On August 27, he addressed "one of the largest political meetings ever held in Sacramento."<sup>19</sup> Speaking before a largely Republican audience at the Orleans Hotel, Baker "was received with . . . enthusiastic applause, which at intervals during . . . his eloquent and soul-stirring address, was continued."<sup>20</sup> The anti-Republican *Sacramento Journal*, on the other hand, viewed the gathering less favorably:

The convention of Nigger worshippers assembled yesterday in this city [Sacramento]! This is the first time this dangerous fanaticism has dared bare its breast before the people of California. [Apparently the writer had forgotten the city's Republican convention earlier that spring.] Heretofore it has skulked in dark corners, denied its own identity and kept in the background. It is high time that all national men should unite in saving California from the stain of abolitionism.<sup>21</sup>

Following his address at the Orleans Hotel, Baker departed Sacramento (on August 29) for the small towns and mining camps of Northern California's Mother Lode to bring the Republican message to both townsfolk and prospectors. The Colonel's mission, to garner support for Republican principles, Fremont and the party's two Congressional candidates, would be a difficult one given the certainty of Democratic and Know-Nothing competition statewide and the fact that Baker's party was conducting its initial campaign in California. In addition, cam-

paigning in and of itself, regardless of one's political ties, was a difficult task.

Edward Baker's stumping tour in 1856 closely resembled other political crusades then occurring across rural mid-century America. As they strove to reach remote areas, campaigning politicians, Baker included, were compelled to travel on horseback or buckboard over rutted, dusty roads and crude trails, were exposed to sweltering summer heat or sudden cloud bursts, lodged in rustic hotels or even more rustic tents, and addressed crowds two or three times daily with nothing more than their often-hoarse voices to project their lengthy speeches. To campaign in the rugged Mother Lode and in the numerous rural towns of Northern California, a man needed a sturdy horse, a fit body, and a strong voice. As he rode from Sacramento to Marysville, the first stop on his stumping tour, Baker undoubtedly contemplated the rigorous days and weeks of speaking ahead. He probably wondered also how the populace would receive him as a representative of the Republican party.

Once in Marysville, Baker addressed a large and respectable group of citizens near the Western Hotel. In his speech, the Colonel refuted "in a masterly manner the charge of sectionalism and abolitionism as applied to the Republicans and [showed] how the opposition to the extension of slavery was strictly in accordance with the Constitution. . . ." <sup>22</sup> Later in his address Baker discussed the benefits to California of the proposed Pacific Railroad. <sup>23</sup> The pro-Democratic *Marysville Express* evaluated Baker's ending remarks:

We have never heard a more brilliant peroration than that which enchaind the large audience at the close of Col. Baker's speech. . . but a deep gloom settled upon the countenances of a large portion of the audience, evidently caused by regret, that one endowed with such God-like abilities should prostitute them in a cause so unholy. <sup>24</sup>

On September 1 Baker delivered another speech in front of Oroville's United States Hotel. For two hours he held the multitude captive with enthralling passages and then won their hearts when he recognized some listeners from Illinois with whom he had served in the Mexican War. <sup>25</sup> The next scheduled Republican orator, Wilson Flint, announced that since eloquence itself had been exhausted (due to Baker's fine rhetoric) he (Flint) would not speak. After his encouraging performance and reception in Oroville, Baker returned to Sacramento, probably to rest and to attend a Republican meeting slated for September 5.

At that meeting the Colonel gave a brief account of his recent speaking tour and made a few practical political suggestions to the audience. He took particular care to emphasize the necessity of a continued Republican effort in the campaign, despite the overwhelming odds. Following this political huddle in Sacramento Baker prepared to resume the canvass.

On September 6 the Colonel left for Placerville, a small town east of Sacramento. There, he lectured a Republican mass meeting for two and one-half hours. The *Times* reported that Baker's eloquence was cheered loudly and boldly predicted that "if our party can keep Col. Baker . . . in the field till the 4th of November [election day] the success of Fremont in this State is as certain as in almost any other State in the Union." <sup>26</sup> Four days later, in Nevada City, Baker lectured on the "Principles of Republicanism." According to one listener, Baker

showed up the fallacy of southern men in their habitual cry of disunion . . . and . . . convinced every man present (for there [were] some northern men who fear the south will secede . . . if they are not allowed to extend slavery to free territory) that the man, the section, the state to raise the banner of disunion would never be found. <sup>27</sup>

Another observer noted:





The Republicans are in good spirits & I think their cause is gaining ground every day. E. D. Baker . . . delivered a most eloquent appeal in favor of Fremont. . . . Others have been here [Nevada City] but Baker had double the audience that attended the other meetings.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast, the *San Jose Tribune* noted that "The Col. [in his speeches] is now going whole hog . . . against every . . . bill that may allow certain rights to the South."<sup>29</sup>

After leaving Nevada City, Baker, in the next several days, made speaking appearances in Petaluma, Forest City and Downieville. One incident in a rough mining camp near the latter town demonstrated the difficulties California Republicans faced in 1856 and how the Colonel's charismatic appeal sometimes swayed hostile audiences. An observer, Calvin McDonald, remembered that as Baker began his speech that day the crowd's initial silent reception revealed its opposition to the Colonel's stand. Baker spoke for one-half hour without any perceptible effect on the grizzled miners, and then, according to McDonald,

seeming to be gathering all his energies . . . [Baker] began to pace along the bench [from where he spoke], pouring out wave after wave [of oration]. At length something like a tremor ran through the silent throng. . . . The men yelled for I don't know how long, and made a rush upon the platform; Baker and his bench were overthrown and when the orator had regained his stand, it was several minutes before he could be heard and go on with his triumphant speech.<sup>30</sup>

Encouraged, Baker moved on and spoke at gatherings in Grass Valley, Mokelumne Hill, Camp Seco and San Andreas, all the while expounding the Freedom-Fremont-Railroad theme. If the Colonel anticipated a respite following his San Andreas appearance he was disappointed, for on October 22 the *Times* printed Baker's new itinerary:<sup>31</sup>

Yankee Jim's	Placer County	October 23
Sacramento	Orleans Hotel	October 24
Stockton	San Joaquin County	October 25
Sonora	Tuolumne County	October 27
Columbia	Tuolumne County	October 28

The following day, because of the great demand

*Cornelius Cole, the editor of the Daily California Times and one of the California Republican party's founding fathers.*

by state Republican groups, Cole's paper announced:

Col. E.D. Baker: This gentleman has numerous invitations from Republicans . . . of the state to address them, but he cannot be everywhere, and he desires us to state he is inclined to follow the line marked out by the State Central Committee.<sup>32</sup>

According to the Republican Committee's schedule, the Colonel would speak in front of Sacramento's Orleans Hotel on Friday evening, October 24. With election day approaching, party leaders had anticipated a large crowd and had reserved the Forrest Theater in the event inclement weather prevented an outdoor gathering. That Friday morning, a cold, drizzling rain blanketed Sacramento, but within hours it had subsided, allowing the plans for an open-air meeting to proceed.<sup>33</sup> However, later that day, Baker, because of a voice impairment caused by two demanding months of speech-making, requested that the proceedings take place indoors, where projection would be less exacting. That evening before 1,500 attentive listeners (and in sharp contrast to the April meeting in which the Republican speaker was shouted down), Baker defended the doctrine of free labor, discussed free territory and vindicated Fremont against the "calumny and slander that [had] been so freely heaped upon him" during the campaign.<sup>34</sup> The affair, proclaimed a rousing success by Republican supporters, concluded with three tremendous cheers for Fremont and three more for Baker.<sup>35</sup>

Greatly disappointed at missing Baker's speech, Olive Cole commented in her diary that same evening:

I expected to attend a Republican meeting at the Forrest Theater [tonight] but no one came for us in the rain. Col. Baker addressed the meeting. I felt anxious to hear the great Republican orator.<sup>36</sup>



A week after his Forrest Theater appearance Baker (now dubbed the "Gray Eagle of Republicanism" because of his hair color and majestic presence on the podium) returned to San Francisco and discovered it was unlike the city he had left four months earlier. Its work completed, the Vigilance Committee had disbanded in August and most citizens were content to forget the frenzied days of lynchings and mob rule that had gripped their city. Baker's absence during the campaign probably was noticed by San Francisco's political observers and was certainly a calculated strategic step; Republican bosses had opted for less controversial orators, Frederick Tracy and Wilson Flint, to canvass there.

The Colonel's reappearance did not elicit any special comment from the *Alta*. Instead, under the caption "Republican Warhorse," the paper announced simply that Baker would address a Republican meeting that night on Sansome Street.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, Cole's *Times* attached no significance to Baker's journey to San Francisco.<sup>38</sup> By election day, though they may have read the *Alta's* favorable coverage of



*The Forrest Theater, Sacramento, where Baker addressed 1500 listeners near the end of the campaign.*



Baker's San Francisco speeches, most San Franciscans were concerned more about the voting.<sup>39</sup>

Two weeks after the balloting California newspapers printed final election results. The returns showed a resounding, though not unexpected Democratic victory:

RESULTS OF THE 1856 CALIFORNIA PRESIDENTIAL  
AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

	Democrat		Know-Nothing		Republican
President	Buchanan 53,365	Fillmore	36,165	Fremont	20,339
Congress	Scott 50,813	Whitman	36,058	Rankin	21,975
	McKibben 50,896	Dibble	35,376	Turner	21,164

Source: *Sacramento Daily Union*, November 18, 1856

In addition to capturing both Congressional seats, the Democrats also regained their majority in both houses of the state legislature; combined representation in the Senate and Assembly following the election was Democrats seventy-eight, Know-Nothings nineteen, Republicans fourteen.<sup>40</sup> Equally significant to the complete Democratic victory was the stunning defeat suffered by the Know-Nothings.

In 1855, because of their party's rapidly growing appeal, California Know-Nothings had looked ahead to the 1856 election and further success. Owing to the subsequent internal split over the slavery issue and the lack of discipline exhibited by

party members, most of whom possessed diverse political backgrounds and thus represented different factions, the Know-Nothings underwent a catastrophic and ultimately fatal setback in the 1856 elections. The voting only confirmed what party leaders and opponents had anticipated since the formal internal split earlier that year. Unlike the Know-Nothings, California Republicans had encountered primarily external problems.

An explanation for the difficulties the California Republican organization faced in the 1856 campaign was offered by Olive Cole when she wrote in her diary: "How could so new a party as the Republicans expect to be victorious?"<sup>41</sup> As she realized, the infant party did not boast the necessary strong support that would enable it to compete successfully in a statewide election or sustain a Presidential candidate. In fact, during the campaign most Republican speakers, Baker included (despite his great appeal), often had addressed audiences composed of more political foes than allies. Nonetheless, as it reflected on the election, the party hierarchy was encouraged by the apparent Know-Nothing demise and the fact that statewide Republican candidates for national office had received nearly twenty percent of the vote. Nationwide, although the Democrat James Buchanan had won the Presidency, Republicans



"correctly diagnosed their loss as a victorious defeat, for they knew, if they could add Pennsylvania and either Indiana or Illinois to the bloc of states already captured, they would win the [Presidential] election [of 1860]."42

Thus as 1856 yielded to the new year the American political scene had evolved into a contest between the opposing ideologies of southern pro-slave Democrats and anti-slave Republicans. Anti-slave Democrats appeared trapped in the middle. Although California Know-Nothings would resurrect themselves briefly in 1857 the party's bubble had burst. In the coming months Know-Nothings nationwide would cast aside their exclusionist beliefs and join parties professing slavery sentiments compatible with their own. And, in so doing, they would contribute to the ongoing political polarization that would characterize the American political scene and ultimately result in civil war four years later.

For Baker, Cole and other California Republicans, 1856 had heralded the beginning of a new experiment. Their party, so humble in origin, had entered the fray nine months earlier and had survived. Baker and others had bolstered the party in this early round, giving it the impetus to wage future battles. Though a positive determination is impossible to render, Baker's work for the California Republican organization in 1856 (and in the next three years) played, as Cole gratefully noted, a major role in the party's success statewide. None could deny the Colonel's charm and seductive way with words; and even though he never held elective office in California, his work at the front lines among the miners in the diggin's and the well-dressed city-folk as well as his straightforward, logical approach to issues won supporters that otherwise may have opposed the Republicans.<sup>43</sup> The tireless work of Baker and others in 1856 and in subsequent campaigns, though

not immediately rewarded at the ballot box, provided the foundation that would allow Lincoln to carry California in 1860 enroute to the White House.

The photographs are courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

## Notes

1. Organized in 1854, the American or Know-Nothing Party promulgated an anti-Catholic, America-for-Americans doctrine. This philosophy appealed to many across the United States and by May 1854 even geographically remote California possessed a Know-Nothing organization. By January 1856 Know-Nothings temporarily had supplanted the Democrats as California's dominant political party. As a result of the 1855 election Know-Nothings boasted a majority in both houses of the California state legislature. In addition, their entire ticket of state officers had been elected. Peyton Hurt, "The Rise and Fall of the Know-Nothings in California," *California Historical Society Quarterly* IX (June 1930), p. 107. Hereinafter cited as Hurt, "Rise and Fall."
2. Edward A. Dickson, "Lincoln and Baker: The Story of a Great Friendship," *Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly* XXXIV (September 1952), p. 233. Hereinafter cited as Dickson, "Lincoln and Baker."
3. Cornelius Cole, *Memoirs of Cornelius Cole*, (New York: McLaughlin Brothers, 1908), pp. 112-113. Hereinafter cited as Cole, *Memoirs*.
4. Catherine Phillips, *Cornelius Cole - California Pioneer and United States Senator* (San Francisco: John Henry Nash, 1928) p. 80. Hereinafter cited as Phillips, *Cole*. See also Dickson, "Lincoln and Baker," p. 234.
5. Phillips, *Cole*, p. 80 and Cole, *Memoirs*, p. 113.
6. Phillips, *Cole*, p. 80. Most Californians viewed the railroad proposal as the Republicans' most appealing idea.
7. *Sacramento Daily Union*, May 2, 1856, p. 2. Hereinafter cited as *Union*.
8. Cornelius Cole to E.D. Morgan, May 3, 1856, University of California at Los Angeles, Cornelius Cole Papers. The American Party's meteoric rise since 1854 was eclipsed by its internal struggles that had resulted in a dramatic weakening of the party's power by 1856.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Cole to Seward May 3, 1856, in Phillips, *Cole*, p. 82.
11. Owing to the sectional split within its ranks, the Know-

- Nothing party's factions each nominated a Presidential candidate in 1856. The anti-slavery wing chose Fremont as its presidential standard-bearer while the southern Know-Nothing faction selected Millard Fillmore. Fremont, save for the Know-Nothing endorsement, was in no way associated with that organization.
12. See Ruhl Jacob Bartlett, *John C. Fremont and the Republican Party* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1930), p. 20 for a further discussion of the Fremont nomination. Remarking on Fremont's candidacy one prominent historian stated that Fremont "had no credentials as a Republican or as a political leader, and the Republican managers, . . . would not have nominated him if they thought they had any real chance of winning the election." David Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, edited by Don Fehrenbacher (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 260. Hereinafter cited as Potter, *Crisis*.
  13. The only existing issues of the paper are in the Bancroft Library, University of California. Donated by Cole in 1878, the bound edition contains this inscription penned by the former editor: "I trust this volume may be carefully preserved as it is the only one of its kind, and may serve at some time to elucidate the Slavery question, and other political matters at a most interesting period in our history."
  14. *Sacramento Daily California Times*, August 15, 1856, p. 2. Hereinafter cited as *Times*.
  15. *Ibid.*, August 17, 1856, p. 3.
  16. For a detailed discussion of Baker's eight years in California see Ray R. Albin, "The Gray Eagle: Colonel Edward Dickinson Baker in California 1852-1860" (Master's Thesis, San Jose State University, 1979).
  17. Cole, *Memoirs*, p. 112. The Connecticut-born Tracy arrived in California in 1849 during the gold rush. He often had spoken from the same platform as Baker prior to the 1856 campaign and likewise had advocated free-soil principles. Later, Tracy served as San Francisco city attorney from 1857-1859.
  18. Cole to Dickson, in Dickson, "Lincoln and Baker," p. 230.
  19. *Times*, August 28, 1856, p. 3.
  20. *Ibid.*
  21. *Sacramento Journal*, August 28, 1856, in Dickson, "Lincoln and Baker," p. 234.
  22. This report of Baker's oration appeared in the *Marysville Herald* and was reprinted in the *Times* on September 5, 1856, p. 2. On August 27, 1856, the California Republican Party, in accordance with the Republican national platform, declared "that slavery in the slave states depends solely upon state laws for its existence; that Congress has no power to modify, change or repeal such laws and is not responsible therefore. We are, therefore opposed to all interference with slavery in the slave states." Phillips, *Cole*, p. 83.
  23. In espousing the construction of a Pacific Railway, Baker reiterated a personal, long-standing interest in such a project. A pro-railroad speech by the Colonel appears in the *San Francisco Daily Alta California*, December 13, 1854, p. 2. Hereinafter cited as *Alta*.
  24. Article from the *Marysville Express* reprinted in the *Times*, September 5, 1856, p. 2.
  25. Article from the *Marysville Herald* reprinted in the *Times*, September 4, 1856, p. 2. Another paper commented on Baker's Oroville address: "The speech of Col. Baker was indeed a magnificent effort. Some of the finest passages we have ever heard were delivered by Col. Baker Monday [September 1]." Article from the *Butte Record* reprinted in the *Times*, September 9, 1856, p. 1.
  26. Cole's partisan *Times* occasionally was over-zealous in its reporting and analysis of Republican events.
  27. *Times*, September 16, 1856, p. 2.
  28. Joel B. Knapp to Thomas O. Larkin, September 19, 1856, in George P. Hammond, ed., *The Larkin Papers*, 20 vols. (Berkeley, California: The University of California Press, 1964), 9:304.
  29. *San Jose Tribune*, September 17, 1856, p. 1.
  30. Calvin McDonald in Oscar T. Shuck, ed., *History of the Bench and Bar in California* (Los Angeles: The Commercial Printing House, 1901), p. 435.
  31. *Times*, October 22, 1856, p. 2.
  32. *Ibid.*, October 23, 1856, p. 2.
  33. Diary of Olive Cole, October 24, 1856. This journal, written by Cornelius Cole's wife, can be found at the University of California at Los Angeles Special Collections Library among the Cole Papers.
  34. *Times*, October 25, 1856, p. 3.
  35. Though its summary of the gathering lacked enthusiasm, the *Union* reported that Baker's speech "was a very plausible, attractive, exparte effort. . . ." *Union*, October 25, 1856, p. 2.
  36. Diary of Olive Cole, October 24, 1856.
  37. *Alta*, October 31, 1856, p. 2.
  38. *Times*, November 2, 1856, p. 2.
  39. *Alta*, November 1 and 2, 1856, p. 2.
  40. Hurt, "Rise and Fall," p. 107. In reality Know-Nothings won only two state senate and eight assembly seats in 1856; the terms of the remaining nine state senators did not expire until 1857. The California Democratic party in 1856 had overlooked its internal differences and had wisely united in an attempt to thwart the Republican and Know-Nothing challenges.
  41. Diary of Olive Cole, November 5, 1856.
  42. Potter, *Crisis*, p. 265.
  43. Baker was elected to the Senate in 1860, as an Oregonian.

Portrait of the Golden State—  
The California State Library's  
Photography Collection

REVIEWS

W. Michael Mathes, *Reviews Editor*

The California Section of the State Library in Sacramento possesses one of the oldest and most comprehensive photographic collections devoted to the Golden State. Its social, political and economic past is documented through 24,000 portraits, 25,000 views of places, events, and subjects, and several albums, portfolios, and books illustrated with original photographs. Although these numbers may not be as large as several institutions, it nonetheless includes images that will delight the historian, writer, museum curator, preservationist, and family historian.

Chronologically, the collection covers the state's past from the Gold Rush to the administration of Jerry Brown. Geographically, every section of California is represented as well as Oregon, Northern Nevada, and Arizona. Because of the library's location, photographs of Northern California predominate. As one would expect, the collection contains representation of a variety of subjects such as agriculture, architecture, business, industry, transportation, historic sites, protest movements, ethnic groups, costumes, sports, and natural disasters.

The following article will provide a general overview of the library's photographic holdings. It is by no means comprehensive but will hopefully tantalize the reader with the types of treasures found in the California Room.

Any discussion of California photographic collections however must begin with the Gold Rush era. This rough and ready time, of course, was documented by the silvery daguerreotype and glass ambrotype. Researchers will find in the California Section a number of these unique images of El Dorado.

The cornerstone of the collection is a spectacular series of eight open air daguerreotypes attributed to John B. Starkweather. Reproduced and published countless times, these mirror images represent perhaps

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*This daguerreotype of Spanish Flat in 1852 is one of the most reproduced images in the California State Library. It is one in a series of eight Gold Rush daguerreotypes attributed to J. B. Starkweather.*

the finest daguerrian record of the Mother Lode. In 1852, the obscure New Englander documented life in the diggings as he roamed through the hills and camps of Spanish Flat, Auburn Ravine, Sugar Loaf Hill and Nevada City. Importantly, his crystal clear quarter-plates show Blacks and Chinese working side-by-side their fellow Caucasian argonauts.

Several other daguerreotypes and equally rare ambrotypes of the gold country supplement the Starkweather series. Two half-plate mirror images depict sluicing operations and an unusual double ambrotype shows the placers near Bogus Creek in Siskiyou County.

Portraits of several "heroes and humbugs" such as Senator David C. Broderick and the "Lion of the Vigilantes" William T. Coleman are preserved on fragile ambrotypes. From the viewpoint of photographic history, the most important ambrotype in the collection is of William Herman Rulofson. The half-plate "daguerreotype on glass" depicts the bearded photographer leaning over the shoulder of a customer in his Sonora gallery. It is reputed to be the only image to survive from his early days in that Tuolumne

County town. Later, Rulofson would move to the more prosperous San Francisco, and under the name of Bradley and Rulofson direct the largest photographic publishing and supply house on the Pacific Coast.

By the 1860s, the wet-plate photograph eclipsed these gilt-edged mementoes from the "Days of Forty-Nine." Capable of mass reproduction and sale, these albumen photographs recorded the development of California until the 1890s. While hundreds of wet-plate photographers flourished, two celebrated artists, Carleton E. Watkins and Eadweard Muybridge, stand out as the giants of this era.

The California Section holds an immense selection of Watkins' photographs. Representative of his long and distinguished career, the collection ranges from small cartes-de-visite to huge mammoth-plate volumes. Among the more than 1800 items, highlights include a two volume set of mammoth-plates entitled "Photographs of California and Oregon;" some two hundred individual mammoth-plates on various subjects, and a curious three volume publication, "Photographic Views of One Hundred and Twelve of The Principal and Most Picturesque Places Of

*C. W. J. Johnson is shown here holding a glass negative in his Monterey studio.*

California" (1886). Unique to the State Library, the latter contains a specially printed title page and table of contents to the 8 x 12 inch prints.

While not as dramatic as the mammoth-plates, the Watkins stereo collection is impressive because of its broad scope. A Catalog compiled by his close friend and promoter, Charles B. Turrill, provides a remarkably definitive listing of the library's 1400 Watkins stereos.

Eadweard Muybridge, during the 1860s and 1870s, rivaled Watkins for acclaim in the field of California landscape photography. Known as the father of the motion picture, the Englishman created hundreds of brilliant views of California and the Pacific Coast. Important examples include a first edition of John Hittell's Yosemite Guide Book (1868) embellished with twenty diminutive photographs by "Helios;" an album of forty choice mammoth-plates of Yosemite probably taken on his 1872 excursion; several 16 x 20 inch views of the Hunter's Point Dry Dock in San Francisco and Mills College in Oakland; his celebrated 1877 panorama of San Francisco, and a splendid group of stereos of the Modoc Indian War. Certainly the most unusual item in the collection is an album entitled "The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico" (1876). It contains sixty 6 x 9 inch albumen photographs of that tropical land. Interestingly, the State Library acquired the copy Muybridge presented to Mrs. W. W. Pendergast, the widow of the photographer's defense attorney during his sensational murder trial.

While Watkins and Muybridge received the greatest recognition, the California Section has important examples by others less famous. Recently, it acquired a beautiful seven part panorama of Oakland in 1879 by Albert H. Wulzen. Others represented in the library's collection include Oscar V. Lange and I.W. Taber.

The three dimensional world of the stereograph provides perhaps the best visual documentation of nineteenth century California. Numbering over 3,000



items (excluding Watkins), these dual images cover a wide variety of subjects ranging from the Yosemite Valley to the construction of the transcontinental railroad. Conveniently, the library has arranged them by place, subject, and then by photographer. Access is gained through a useful subject and photographer index.

Two additional stereo collections devoted to San Jose and San Diego deserve mention. A recently acquired series of forty-nine glass stereographs depict the bustling streets of the Santa Clara Valley town in the mid 1870s. San Diego's emergence and charm during that same decade is preserved in an exceptional group of eighty views taken by Charles P. Fessenden. It includes a rare five part panorama of New Town. Both provide important historical documentation of the early development of these future urban centers.

Through a gift in 1920, the library received the photographic archive of Charles Wallace Jacob Johnson, recognized as the premier photographer of the Monterey Peninsula for the late nineteenth century. The collection consists of diaries, correspondence, glass negatives, stereos, cabinet cards and other

scenic views. The former argonaut and dance instructor came to Monterey in 1880 and focused his dry plate camera on the spectacular natural scenery of the peninsula, historic adobes, Hotel del Monte, and families enjoying the delights of this pleasure land. His views of the plush hotel and its formal gardens form the major portion of the collection.

By the turn of the century, a new era emerged in photography. The advent of flexible film, smaller cameras, improved lenses, and the capability of producing enlargements from small negatives gave rise to a new generation of photographers headed by Arnold Genthe and the pictorialist school. The soft images produced by their cameras combined technology with art. Although the library does not have any Genthe photographs, it acquired the collection of Louis J. Stellman, a San Francisco journalist who was clearly influenced by the master.

Consisting of over 16,000 negatives and prints, the Stellman collection continues the photographic record of San Francisco after Genthe left for New York in 1911. As with Genthe, San Francisco's Chinatown attracted the eye of this talented amateur. Carrying a compact detective camera, Stellman obtained hundreds of candid views of street scenes, families, merchants, parades, and such fun-loving activities as kite flying. Next to Genthe, Stellman's soft, romanticized photographs yielded the most valuable record of this transplanted Cathay.

The "City by the Bay" is further represented in two folio size albums compiled by Hamilton B. Dobbin. A former policeman, he pasted into his albums not only hundreds of views of street scenes but also photos of the sensational Boss Ruef graft trials, the 1920 Democratic National Convention, and the first woman to cast a vote in San Francisco.

Quite naturally, the library has amassed a sizable collection on Sacramento. Every major city, it seems, attracted a photographer of note. In the case of Sacramento, it was Harold J. McCurry. The library in

1964 had the good fortune of obtaining the best of McCurry's output. Consisting of over 2500 images spanning the years 1918 to 1948, the collection superbly chronicles Sacramento streets, businesses, public buildings, floods, river craft, bridges, parades, personalities, and World War II. As well, McCurry photographed many cities and towns in Northern California and such subjects as bridges, rivers, aqueducts and canals, agriculture, mining, shipping, aviation, railroads, trucks, automobiles, landmarks, missions, and the Yosemite Valley. The library also has a five volume index to the negatives produced by the photo company during these years.

Complementary to the McCurry collection are the photograph albums compiled by Frederick H. Meir. A descendant of a Sacramento pioneer, Meir pasted into his albums over 3000 photographs of the capital city from the 1850s to the 1950s. Most, however, cover the decades of the 1940s and 1950s. The large oblong albums contain professional and amateur snapshots of storefronts, interiors of businesses, street scenes, floods, historic sites, state buildings, the construction of the east wing of the Capitol Building, and the Days of Forty-Nine Parade.

To the north, Henry Sackrider provided coverage of the Marysville-Yuba City area during the 1920s and 1930s. A professional photographer for many years, Sackrider took high quality pictures of business establishments, the many floods that ravaged the twin cities, cemeteries, and Chinese New Year parades. En toto, the collection comprises over 200 images.

Although coverage of California Indians is disappointing, the library has a small but significant group of thirty-nine Emma Freeman portraits. Freeman concentrated on the tribes of her own Northwestern California for photographic subject matter. Like Genthe and Stellman, she employed the soft focus technique to obtain a feeling of romanticism and mystery. She embellished several of these charming





*Apparently, the great pioneer photographer C. E. Watkins fancied himself as an argonaut in this "New Boudoir Series" self-portrait. Note his photographer's wagon in the background.*



*Founded by Harold J. McCurry in 1909, this company not only served as the official photographers of the State Fair, but also as the "unofficial" photographers of the state's capitol city.*

portraits with pencil enhancements and preprinted backgrounds. The library is only one of two repositories of this ethnic photographer's work, obtained in 1920. Fortunately, too, the library has a complete set of volumes and portfolios of Edward S. Curtis' celebrated "The North American Indians." The stunning 12 x 16 inch photogravures are regarded as one of the most significant pictorial studies of the California Indians during the early part of this century.

Interest in historic sites and natural wonders inspired many amateur and professional photographers since the daguerrian era. This interest mushroomed in the twentieth century. Fascinated with the missions, old adobes, Mother Lode, redwood forests, wine country, and national and state parks, scores of photographers criss-crossed the state and produced sizable collections. Among the best in the California section is a series of 600 signed and mounted prints by Van Court Warren during the 1950s. Luckily some photographers had the foresight to photograph architecturally significant areas before their destruction. Recently, through a gift and purchase, the library acquired a collection of over 180 views of Los Angeles' historic Bunker Hill district before the wrecking ball and bulldozer literally flattened the hill. Taken by Arnold Hylen of Montebello, these distinctive photographs dating from the 1940s to the 1970s depict once elegant Victorians, hotels, and apartment buildings.

Finally, the library has not neglected the contributions of the great contemporary artistic photographers. Certainly, Ansel Adams stands out. Over the years, the library has made every effort to collect his sumptuously illustrated books and portfolios. Beautifully printed and designed, highlights include his rare "Taos Pueblo" (1930) and the portfolios of "Parmelian Prints of the High Sierra" (1927) and "Yosemite Valley" (1960). As well, the library has obtained several books with original photographs by

such skillful photographers as Brett Weston, Richard J. Julian, Richard J. Elkus, and Arnold Hylen.

In addition to the above described subject and geographic collections, a general file of over 24,000 indexed portraits is available. Arranged by group and individual, it is rich in pictures of pioneers, state officials, authors, and artists. The file holds portraits of every California governor since statehood, prominent politicians, and important visitors to the capital. The general file is supplemented by a huge file of over 6000 indexed portraits of California men who served in World War I; vast numbers of nineteenth century actors and actresses; Hollywood movie stills, and a small number of mug books featuring California's criminal element.

Researchers gain access to the general photograph collection via the card indexes located in the California Room. It is organized by subject, place, and portrait. The library has arranged the geographic index by general views, county and city or town. Cities and towns are further broken down by buildings, institutions such as churches and schools, streets, and events. Those interested in daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and other cased images will find a separate card index. As mentioned earlier, a multi-volume ring binder index lists the stereographs by subject, place and photographer. Most of the photograph albums, however, have been given either a Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress number and are located by main entry in the book catalog. To date, the library has not indexed individual photographs in the albums. To further aid the picture searcher, the California Section staff has compiled separate typed listings of the Watkins and Stellan collections.

The California Section is open to the public Monday through Friday and written inquiries are invited. Photographs will be reproduced for a modest fee.

All of the photographs are courtesy of the California State Library.



## Book Reviews

*The University of Santa Clara, A History 1851-1977.*

By Gerald McKevitt, S.J. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979, 385 pp. \$19.50).

*Stanford, From the Foothills to the Bay.*

By Peter C. Allen. (Stanford: Stanford Alumni Association and Stanford Historical Society, 1980. 228 pp. \$40.00).

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*Reviewed by Frank L. Beach, Chairman of the Department of History at the University of San Francisco.*

University histories are often mere litanies of names, events, and remembrances—nostalgia meant for those closely associated with the schools. No such perfunctory memorialization mars McKevitt's history of Santa Clara or Allen's Stanford. Although quite different in format, they are impressive and substantial studies of two major private universities located a few miles apart. Whereas Allen, a journalist long associated with "the Farm," presents us with an attractively packaged portrait of Stanford that features stunning photography complemented by a readable and informative, if succinct, text that recounts the school's past as well as its present, McKevitt, a historian, gives us a complete history of Santa Clara that is meticulously researched and documented, objectively presented and superbly drafted. He has unquestionably recorded Santa Clara's story in definitive fashion. Although Allen's work is a fascinating and engaging one, Stanford still awaits a full historical treatment; it is hoped it will be forthcoming in time for the school's centennial anniversary but a decade away.

The two schools developed quite differently from the beginning. McKevitt describes Santa Clara's early development as slow and difficult. Established on the site of a Franciscan mission in 1851 by the Reverend John Nobili, an Italian Jesuit, it was begun as a Catholic bastion of learning to counter California's growing Protestantism. For a half century and more it functioned primarily as a boarding school and "disciplinary citadel" for the general education and moral training of the sons of wealthy Californians. Only when it significantly expanded its curriculum and programs in the early twentieth century did it begin to take on the guise of a full-fledged university. The faculty, for instance, did not include an instructor with an earned Ph.D. until 1932, although it included some remarkable scholars, such as Jerome Richard, "the Padre of

the Rains" who developed the Sunspot theory of long range weather forecasting, Richard Bell, the "Marconi of the West," Bernard Hubbard, the "Glacier Priest" explorer of the Alaskan wilds, and Jolin Montgomery, whose experiments with free flight are legendary. As late as the 1940s, McKevitt concludes, Santa Clara remained "aloof and protected, a quiet backwater in an agitated sea."

Stanford, on the other hand, experienced an auspicious birth and early development. Under the dynamic direction of David Starr Jordan and the paternal care of Mrs. Stanford, the infant university overcame some momentary adversity, passed through its "Stone Age" of initial construction, and quickly blossomed into the West Coast's leading private university. Moreover, according to Allen, by vigorously promoting research and scholarship Ray Lyman Wilbur (1916-1943) steered Stanford "directly into the currents of vital life in the world" around it. If Santa Clara had an introverted institutional experience, Stanford's was distinctly outgoing and involved.

Santa Clara, however, underwent a dramatic transformation in the fifties and sixties that was fueled by an extraordinary five-fold growth in its student body. It became co-educational, embraced eclecticism, developed new and varied professional programs and enlarged existing ones, modernized its facilities, and was so characteristic of the times the "old paternalism and authoritarianism gave way to an atmosphere of few restraints." Santa Clara had finally joined the academic mainstream. But in doing so, McKevitt suggests, it paid a price. By shifting from a pronounced posture of religious advocacy to an institutional resemblance of its public counterparts, Santa Clara sacrificed some of its Catholic identity, a situation lamented by those who perceive it as the abandonment of the particular mission of Catholic higher education and applauded by others who believe the change to have been inevitable and educationally for the better.

Stanford experienced no such traumatic change of identity, only the stresses and strains of continued rapid development. Unerringly guided into the modern age by J.E. Wallace Sterling and his successors Stanford earned a reputation as the nation's most innovative and enterprising campus by spawning major centers of scientific, business, and social research, developing a faculty of international renown, excelling at fund-raising, and keying the industrial growth of its area. Stanford by the sixties, in Allen's opinion, had become a world class university.

As institutional histories these books do much more





*A view of Stanford University c. 1912. Under dynamic direction the school quickly became the West Coast's leading private university.*

than tell tales of the hallowed halls of academe; they celebrate the considerable contributions made by two distinguished universities to the society around them and as such they must be regarded as important additions to the intellectual and social history of California and the San Francisco region.

*Lawrence & Houseworth / Thomas Houseworth Co.,  
A Unique View of the West, 1860-1886.*

By Peter E. Palmquist (Columbus, Ohio: National Stereoscopic Association, 1980. 150 pp. \$22.95).

*Reviewed by Martha Kennedy, CHS Photographs Curator.*

At a time of good fortune in Thomas Houseworth's business, the following claim appeared in its 1869 catalogue: "A stranger in one evening, with a good stereoscope, can form a better idea of California scenery than he could by a month's travel through the state." One begins to understand how the public could believe such a statement after examining Peter Palmquist's account of Lawrence & Houseworth (which became Thomas Houseworth Co. after 1868, after George Lawrence retired).

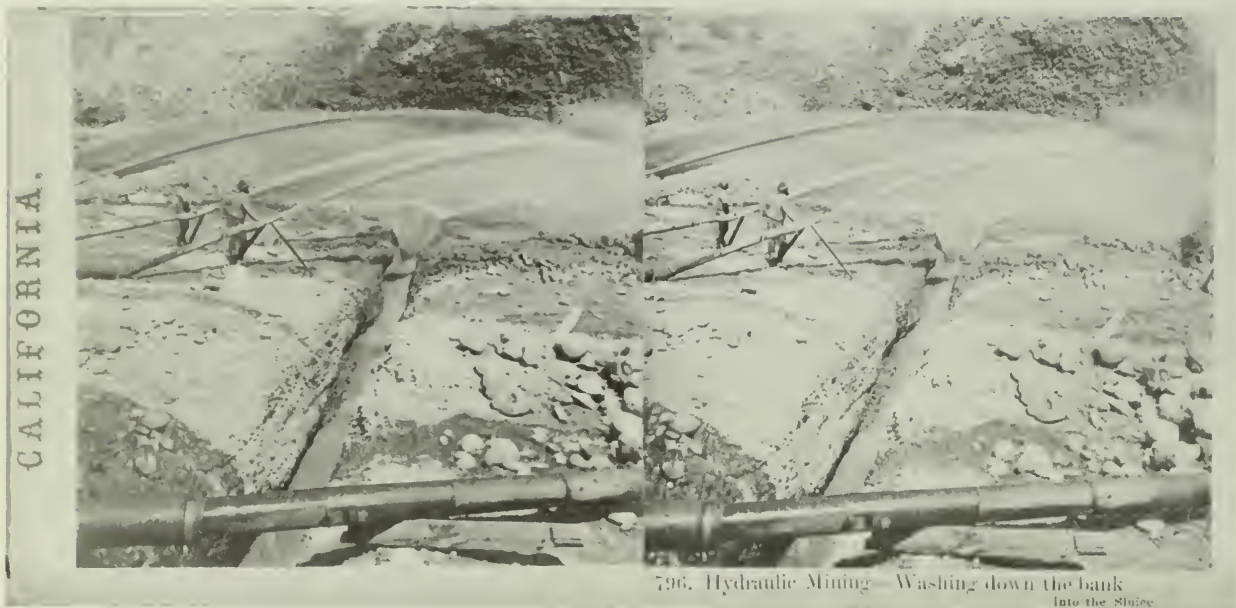
The stereograph consists of two slightly dissimilar images which, when viewed through a stereoscope, blend into one image with three dimensional qualities. In the 1860s, the viewing of the stereographs had gained wide popularity; stereoviews of sites all over the world were

readily available for purchase by the public and the demand for such views of California was great.

Originally opticians in San Francisco, Lawrence and Houseworth began to offer in 1859, on a modest scale, stereoscopic views and viewers to their clientele. By 1863, the partners had begun to obtain numerous images from photographers of the state, and had entered into the business of stereo publishing. Within a decade, the firm had become the leading producer of stereographs in California. When the demand for such views declined markedly in the 1870s, Houseworth boldly opened a gallery that specialized in fine portraiture and built it into a highly successful photographic business in the 1870s. There is, apparently, no evidence to suggest that George Lawrence had any interest in doing photography; furthermore, according to Palmquist, nothing indicates for certain that Thomas Houseworth himself did any camera work until 1870. Despite these facts, Houseworth's firms established a reputation for producing photographic work of high quality. How this came about is carefully related by the author.

He reveals, for example, how Houseworth worked consistently to engage talented photographers such as Charles Weed, George Fiske, and others to provide stereoscopic negatives to the firm. In addition to a sizable stock of good images, the capacity for effective marketing and mass production of good quality was also critical. Income from their optical business, combined with Houseworth's shrewdly calculated expansion of stereo offerings and promotion of them, all contributed to the success of their business. Unlike Carleton E. Watkins, a major rival in the production of fine views, but a poor businessman, Law-

A Lawrence & Houseworth stereo view—  
Hydraulic mining in California (c. 1864-65)



796. Hydraulic Mining—Washing down the bank  
into the sluice

rence & Houseworth/Thomas Houseworth Co. dominated the market for such production.

To a greater extent than other firms, Houseworth's had its photographers systematically photograph all notable phenomena, natural and man-made, in central California. It published a first rate series of images that capture the appearance of early San Francisco, other cities and towns in the Bay area and Central Valley, the Yosemite Valley, mining in Tuolumne County and the Nevada Comstock, and railroads throughout the state. These series provide exceptionally thorough documentation of sites and areas in California at a time of crucial change. During 1860-1886, the years covered in this book, agricultural and industrial development, as well as patterns of urban expansion were being established in the state. The unique contribution of Lawrence & Houseworth/Thomas Houseworth Co. in visually recording this important period is conveyed in the author's concise text and summarized by his impressive listings of titles published by the firm.

An expert on the history of photography in California, Peter Palmquist is known for many publications which include two fine books on photographers, a biography of

pictorialist Emma B. Freeman and a monograph on Augustus W. Ericson, printer and photographer. In the preface to this book, he states that he began this work with the seemingly straightforward aim of compiling as complete as possible a listing of stereo titles issued by Lawrence & Houseworth and Thomas Houseworth Co. The author has organized this information into four appendices that list stereoviews issued by Lawrence & Houseworth, those issued by Thomas Houseworth & Co., the later series of portraits published as Houseworth's Celebrities, and titles of mammoth views also published by the firm. The lists represent the product of exhaustive research and will prove a highly valuable resource to many collectors, curators, and librarians with large holdings of stereographs.

The variety and quality of images issued by Houseworth's firms is indicated by many well chosen illustrations in this book. Examples from the series of stereos, Houseworth's Celebrities and business ephemera complement the text and lists of titles. In addition to representative views of Yosemite and San Francisco, subjects such as a Cactus Giganta, the Launch of the *Comanche* in San Francisco, Washoe and Digger Indians, as well as a Chinese

ragpicker are reproduced. The quality of reproduction is generally good; most images appear clear and sharp, yet varied in tone, although enlargements of some stereos are disappointing.

It is fortunate that the author broadened the original purpose of his study, for he has put together a well researched, thoroughly documented history of a prominent photographic business in California. In so doing, he has broken new ground among recently published works in the history of photography. Although studies of nineteenth century photographers have been done, few if any thorough studies of photographic publishing firms have emerged before this book. Palmquist has also gone far toward assessing the significant role of stereo publishing in the history of photography in California.

Although the book addresses these broad issues, there remain some unanswered questions that are narrower in scope, yet worth mention. Given the diligent, enterprising character of Houseworth, as portrayed by the author, one would like to know more about his personal involvement in the practice of photography. More discussion that compares other stereopublishers' offerings with Houseworth's would also be welcome.

In providing an excellent account of Houseworth's firms, the author reveals the competitive milieu in which the photographic community of San Francisco evolved. The book is also invaluable in that it illuminates the importance of a leading photographic establishment in documenting an era during which California and the West underwent decisive transformation.

### *Voices for the Earth: A Treasury of the Sierra Club Bulletin.*

Edited by Ann Gilliam. Introduction by Harold Gilliam. (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1979. xxi, 567 pp. \$19.95).

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*Reviewed by John B. Gleason, Professor of English in the University of San Francisco, a member of many conservation organizations and a teacher and writer in the field of Elizabethan literary history.*

The long history of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* from 1893 to the present mirrors the Club's unfolding purposes. In

*Voices for the Wilderness*, a bedside book of the best sort, Ann Gilliam has given a kind of "highlights" impression of the *Bulletin*, faster moving and more deliberately entertaining than the *Bulletin* itself. In 148 three- or four-page selections, often much pruned from the originals, Ann Gilliam covers a wide variety of topics, attractively laced with humor and anecdote. Besides the predictable topics, a whole section is devoted to climbing and another to illustrious members of the past. All this is most welcome, especially illustrated with some of the photographs that have been among the *Bulletin*'s great strengths.

On matters that are controversial within the Club there is a distinct note of caution. One illustrious member of the present day is laconically described in a headnote as follows: "Brower served as editor of the *Bulletin* and as executive director of the club. He is now an honorary vice-president. In 1969 he founded Friends of the Earth, of which he is president." More helpfully, a member of a hiking party David Brower led recalls, "Dave always took us to the upper limits of places, I soon found out." This tendency was to have a sequel, for which one has to turn to the noble Profile of Brower in *The New Yorker* for March 20, 1971 and the two following issues. The two long and valuable sections on "The Club Militant," a third of the book, show the Club uniformly pitted against external foes but not against itself. The atmosphere of *Voices for the Wilderness* is agreeably clubby—the Sierra Club is after all a club—but the history of its search for self-definition would lend a deeper moral dimension to this handsome and upbeat volume.

The photographs are from the CHS Library.



# California Check List

By Joy Berry, *Reference Librarian*

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent publications, including reprints or revised editions, which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

Adams, Alexander B. *The Disputed Lands*. New York: Putnams, 1981. 476 pp. \$17.95.

Balsley, Betsy. *The Los Angeles Times California Cookbook*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times. \$25.00.

Barton, Walter E. *In the Twilight of my Memory: Windows to the Past*. Ardmore, PA: Dorrance and Company, Publishers, 1981. Publisher, Cricket Terrace Center, Ardmore, PA 19003. \$5.00.

Bookspan, Martin and Ross Yockey. *Andre Previn: A Biography*. New York: Doubleday, 1981.

Bradley, Bill. *Commercial Los Angeles, 1925-1947: Photographs from the "Dick" Whittington Studio*. Glendale: Interurban Press, 1981. 144 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale, 91206. \$14.95.

Brown, Oran Weston. *The Lost Hueneme and Port Hueneme*. Author, 1981. 200 pp.

Butler, Phyllis Filiberti. *The Valley of Santa Clara: Historic Buildings, 1792-1920*. Novato: Presidio Press, 1981. 191 pp. Publisher, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, 94947. \$8.95.

California Institute of Public Affairs. *Ethnic Groups in California: A Guide to Organizations and Information Resources*. Claremont: California Institute of Public Affairs, 1981. Publisher, Claremont Colleges, P.O. Box 10, Claremont, 91711. \$16.50.

Carson, John Victor. *Reminiscences of Dominguez Ranch and the Carson Family:*

*An Oral History* . . . 2nd edition.

Dominguez Hills: Dominguez Archives Committee, California State University, 1981. 47 pp.

Chase, Evelyn Hyman. *Mountain Climber: George B. Bayley, 1840-1894*. Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1981. 173 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 558, Palo Alto, 94302. \$12.95.

Clauss, Francis J. *Alcatraz, "Island of Many Mistakes."* Menlo Park: Briarcliff Press, 1981. 87 pp. Author, 196 Sand Hill Circle, Menlo Park, 94025. \$4.95.

Cole, Tom. *A Short History of San Francisco*. San Francisco: Lexikos, 1981. 144 pp. Publisher, 703 Market St., San Francisco, 94103. \$12.95 (cloth); \$7.95 (paper).

Dasmann, Raymond F. *California's Changing Environment*. San Francisco: Boyd and Fraser, 1981. 76 pp. Publisher, 3627 Sacramento St., San Francisco, 94118.

Ditlefsen, Charles. 1982 *"Those Magnificent Trains" Calendar*. Glendale: Interurban Press, 1981. Publisher, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale, 91205. \$5.95.

Doss, Margot Patterson. *The Bay Area at Your Feet*. Revised edition. San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1981. 288 pp. Publisher, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, 94947. \$7.95.

Fonda, Henry. *Henry Fonda*, as told to Howard Teichmann. New York: NAL Books, 1981. \$15.95.

Fletcher, Jane and Robert Conover. *Marin: The Place, the People*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981. 171 pp. \$24.95.

Gates, Paul Wallace. *Pressure Groups and Recent American Land Policies*. The Carl Becker Lecture, Ithaca, NY: Department of History, Cornell University, 1980. Publisher, McGraw Hill, Ithaca, NY 14853.

Geary, Mary DeForest. *A Giant in Those Days*. Brunswick, GA: Coastal Books, 1981. Publisher, 1208 Gloucester St., Brunswick, GA 31520.

Hammond, Richard. *The San Joaquin Valley*. Photographs by Richard Hammond. Writing (and printing) by Nick Zachreson. Visalia: Rick

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- Hammond Photography, 1979. 141 pp. Publisher, 705 S. Court St., Visalia, 93277. \$25.00.
- Higham, Charles. *Bette: The Life of Bette Davis*. New York: Macmillan, 1981. \$12.95.
- Hirschhorn, Clive. *The Hollywood Musical*. Foreword by Gene Kelly. New York: Crown, 1981. \$30.00.
- Holland, F. Ross, Jr. and Henry G. Law. *The Old Point Loma Lighthouse, Cabrillo National Monument, San Diego, California*. Historic Structure Report. Denver, CO: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 1981. 248 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225.
- Hopkins, Henry. *50 West Coast Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in California*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1981. \$17.95.
- Lamson, Berenice. *There's Only One Coke*. In collaboration with the late Dr. R. Coke Wood. Sonora: Mother Lode Press, July, 1981. Author, 3253 Calhoun Way, Stockton, 95209. \$12.00.
- Layman, Richard. *Shadow Man: The Life of Dashiell Hammett*. New York: Harcourt and Brucoli Clark, 1981. 352 pp. \$14.95.
- Lewis, Ernest Allen. *The Fremont Cannon: High Up and Far Back*. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1981. 168 pp. \$32.50, limited edition.
- Lockwood, Charles. *Dream Palaces*. New York: Viking, 1981. \$19.95.
- Longtin, Ray C. *Three Writers of the Far West: A Reference Guide*. (Joaquin Miller, Charles Warren Stoddard, and George Sterling). Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980. 296 pp. Publisher, 70 Lincoln St., Boston, Mass. \$32.50.
- Losson, Jill and Gene Anthony. *The Great Cable Car Adventure Book*. Novato: Presidio Press, 1981. 144 pp. Publisher, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, 94947. \$6.95.
- McCall, Dewitt Clinton III. *California Artists 1935 to 1956*. Bellflower: De Rus Fine Art Books, 1981. 212 pp. Publisher, 9100 Artesia Blvd., Bellflower, 90706. \$50, Library binding; \$150, Deluxe edition.
- Magnin, Cyril and Cynthia Robins. *Call Me Cyril*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. \$12.95.
- Marinacci, Barbara and Rudy. *Take Sunset Boulevard: The Fabulous New Way to See L.A.* Novato: Presidio Press, 1981. Publisher, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, 94947. \$7.95.
- Meyers, George. *Yosemite Climber*. Berkeley: Wilderness Press, 1981. 96 pp. Publisher, 2440 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 94704. \$17.50.
- Miller, Ronald Dean. *Shady Ladies of the West*. Republication. Tucson: Westernlore, 1981. Publisher, P.O. Box 35305, Tucson, AZ 85704. \$8.50.
- Nemiroff, Suzanne de Beaulieu. *A Twelve Year Index of the Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly*. Santa Monica: Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly, 1981. 130 pp. Publisher, 2429-23rd St., Santa Monica, 90405. \$25.00.
- Nicholson, Loren. *Rails Across the Ranchos*. Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1980. 197 pp. \$18.95.
- Parks, Annette White. *qh awala li, "water coming down place."* A History of Gualala, Mendocino County, California. Ukiah: Freshcut Press, 1981. 160 pp. Publisher, 133 Clara Ave., Ukiah, 95482. Limited edition, \$45; \$24.00 (cloth); \$12.95 (paper).
- Perry, John. *Jack London: An American Myth*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1981. 356 pp. \$21.95 (cloth); \$10.95 (paper).
- Rexroth, Kenneth. *Excerpts from a Life*. Santa Barbara: Conjunction Books, 1981. 61 pp. \$45.00 (signed). San Francisco. Public Library. Friends. *1906 Remembered*. San Francisco: City Guides Oral History Committee, 1980. \$7.00.
- Schaffer, Jeffrey P. *Lassen Volcanic National Park: A Natural History Guide to Lassen Volcanic National Park, Caribou Wilderness, Hat Creek Valley and McArthur-Burney Falls State Park*. Berkeley: Wilderness Press, 1981. 224 pp. Publisher, 2440 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 94704. \$12.95.
- Sidney-Fryer, Donald (comp) *Emperor of Dreams: A Clark Ashton Smith Bibliography*. West Kingston, RI: Donald M. Grant, 1978. 303 pp.
- Smith, Harry. *Harry Smith: Magic Moments*. Los Angeles: Stephen White Editions, 1981. Publisher, 752 N. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, 90069. \$19.95.
- Snaer, Seymour. *San Francisco 1939, an Intimate Photographic Portrait*. Livermore: Working Press, 1981. 48 pp. Publisher, Box 687, Livermore, 94550. \$5.95 (paper).
- Swett, Ira L., et al. *Sacramento Northern*. Third printing with updated information. Glendale: Interurban Press, 1981. 208 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale, 91205. \$18.95.
- Theatre Directory of the Bay Area, 1981*. San Francisco: Theatre Communications Center of the Bay Area, 1981. Publisher, 1182 Market St., San Francisco, 94102. \$7.00.
- Tomlin, Pinky. *The Object of My Affection: An Autobiography*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981. 208 pp. \$12.50.
- Turnbull, Betty. *California: The State of Landscape, 1872-1981*. Newport Beach: Newport Harbor Art Museum, 1981. 107 pp. Publisher, 850 San Clemente Drive, Newport Beach, 92660.
- Turner, John. *White Gold Comes to California*. Fresno: California Planting Cotton Seed Distributors, 1981. (Order from) Panorama West Books, 8 East Olive Ave., Fresno, 93728. 272 pp. \$25.00.
- Whitnall, Dorothy L. *Point Reyes: A Guide to the Trails, Roads, Beaches, Campgrounds, Lakes, Trees, Flowers and Rocks of Point Reyes National Seashore*. Berkeley: Wilderness Press, 1981. 114 pp. Publisher, 2440 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 94704. \$6.95.



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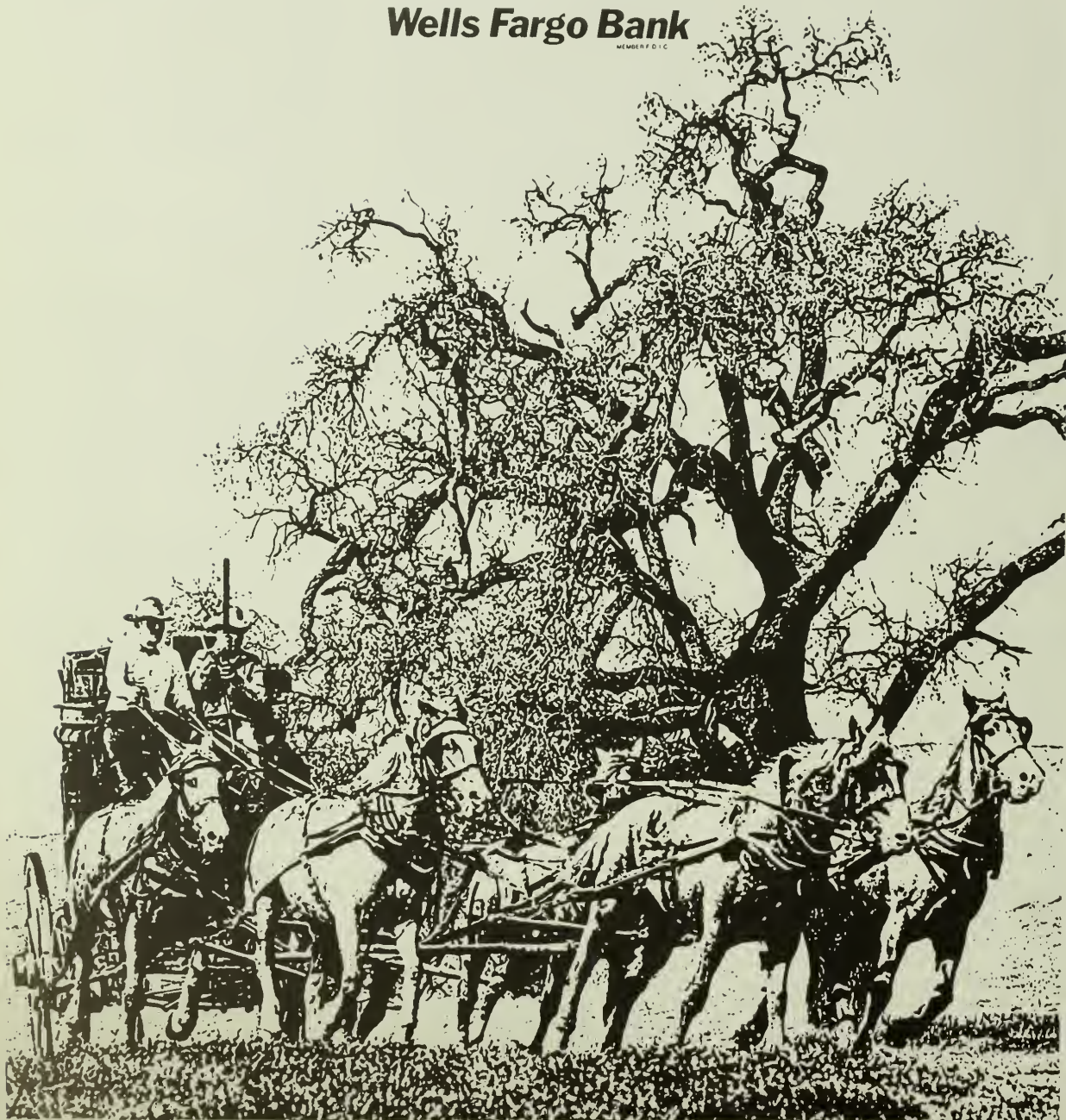
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# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

winter 1981/82



*Gertrude Atherton and Ambrose Bierce*

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Annual membership \$25.00  
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Articles for publication, books for review and editorial correspondence should be sent to the Managing Editor, P.O. Box 3370, San Diego, CA 92103. Manuscripts should be typed, double spaced, with notes on separate sheets, and submitted in duplicate with a stamped and addressed return envelope. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions of the authors.

LC 75-640289

ISSN 0612-2897

Second-class postage paid at San Francisco, California and additional mailing offices.

Publication number 084180

#### COVER

Gertrude Atherton and Ambrose Bierce, two of California's most celebrated authors, corresponded frequently with each other—although not always on friendly terms. For the story of their somewhat stormy relationship please turn to the article beginning on page 332



# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

PUBLISHED SINCE 1922

VOLUME LX WINTER 1981/82 NO. 4

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The Black Press in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1856-1900 306  
*by* J. WILLIAM SNORGRASS

Images of the California Landscape, 1850-1916, Highlighting  
the Collection of the California Historical Society 318  
*by* GERRIE E. KAHN

"Your Picture Hangs in my Salon," The Letters of  
Gertrude Atherton to Ambrose Bierce 332  
*by* EMILY LEIDER

The Italians of San Francisco in 1865: G. B. Cerruti's  
Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 350  
*by* ALESSANDRO BACCARI *and* ANDREW M. CANEPA *with translation*  
*by* OLGA RICHARDSON

## REVIEWS

The California Historical Society's Collection  
of Daguerreotypes 370  
*by* MARTHA KENNEDY

Book Reviews 376  
In Memoriam 381  
California Check List 382  
Volume Contents 385  
Volume Index 389

# The Black Press in the San Francisco Bay Area

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## 1856-1900

Between 1856 and 1900 seven black newspapers were founded in the San Francisco Bay Area. As most black publications of the time, they were founded on socio-political principles rather than business principles. Their objectives were to provide a platform from which blacks could express their views and combat racial prejudice and discrimination in the United States.

The first of these publications on the Pacific Coast was established in San Francisco in 1856 and called the *Mirror of the Times*. Some scholars disagree on when the *Mirror* was first published. However, the volume numbers and dates of the issues available (provided the paper was published on a regular basis) indicate the *Mirror* was first published October 31, 1856.<sup>1</sup> Jonas H. Townsend and Mifflin W. Gibbs served as the *Mirror's* first editors. By 1857 the paper listed agents in twenty-three cities and towns throughout California.

The *Mirror* grew out of a meeting of delegates attending the First Colored Convention of California held in Sacramento in 1855.<sup>2</sup> However, publication did not begin immediately. At this convention it was decided blacks needed a voice—a black newspaper. Judging from the aim of the paper, as outlined by the delegates, it was directed at a white audience as well as a black one:

Our sole objective is, to present our grievances to the people at large in our own way, and through columns of our own press; show them the disabilities we labor under; ask them, in respectful terms to remove them, and we have every reason to believe they will be stricken from the statute-books.<sup>3</sup>

---

J. William Snorgrass is an Assistant Professor of journalism at Florida A & M University in Tallahassee. He received a Master's Degree in journalism and mass communication at the University of Minnesota in 1973. Snorgrass is the author of several articles which include: "Freedom of the Press and Black Publications," "The Black Press and Educational Reforms," and "Contrasting Views of Two San Francisco Black Editors: 1865-1879."

The *Mirror* carried little of what would be classified as "news" today; however, many of the problems facing blacks in the country were presented and discussed in essay or editorial form. The editors reasoned:

All effects are dependent upon some cause . . . Therefore, in attempting to treat an evil of any kind, it is first important to ascertain the cause . . . It matters not as to what category the evils may belong—moral, political or physical—the same principle must be adopted in an attempt at remedy.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the editors of the *Mirror* proposed to discuss the injustices accorded blacks in the columns of the paper in the following manner: (1) the cause of the wrongs; (2) the proper manner of treating them; and (3) how far the colored people can go toward effecting their removal (laws).<sup>5</sup>

The *Mirror* adopted as its motto "Truth Crushed To The Earth Will Rise Again" and launched a vigorous campaign against the Testimony and Witness Laws of California, which barred blacks from giving testimony or appearing as witnesses in court cases involving whites. When efforts failed in 1857 to have these laws repealed, the black population of the state became disorganized and passive on the issue. In an attempt to regain unity, the *Mirror* carried an editorial calling for reunification:

What are we doing to advance the cause of our rights at present in this state—comparatively nothing. We have settled down into a state of indifference and lethargy on this question . . . We are quarreling among ourselves instead of uniting on the subject of our rights, and devising some general plan of operation for the good of the whole people.<sup>6</sup>

In 1858, Mifflin Gibbs became unhappy with the lack of change in San Francisco and moved to Victoria, British Columbia. Shortly after Gibbs departed, Townsend returned to New York and later moved to Brazoria, Texas, where he died in 1872. There is no evidence that the *Mirror* was published after 1858.

From 1858 to 1862, San Francisco was without a black newspaper. However, on April 5, 1862, the *Pacific Appeal* appeared with Peter Anderson as proprietor. Anderson selected Philip A. Bell as his editor. Bell had co-edited the *Colored American* in New York from 1839 to 1841. Bell would later establish his own newspaper in San Francisco and he and Anderson would become bitter rivals.

The first issue of the *Appeal* explained why a black newspaper was needed in the state:

A weekly paper is needed in California as much as in the Atlantic States: One which will be the exponent of our views and principles, our defense against calumny and oppression, and our representative among one of the recognized institutions of civilization.<sup>7</sup>

Early the same year, San Francisco's first black magazine was published by John J. Moore and called the *Luna Visitor*. The following reference to such a publication appeared in the first issue of the *Appeal*:

We enter the field of journalism as the coadjutor of the *Luna Visitor*. There is sufficient room for us both to occupy successfully. The *Visitor* is a monthly periodical, or more properly speaking a magazine, which position we hope it will soon acquire, as we need a representative here in the higher walks of periodical literature, and Mr. Moore is better calculated than ourselves to conduct a publication of that kind.<sup>8</sup>

Like its predecessor, the *Appeal* launched a bitter campaign against California's Testimony and Witness Laws. The paper pointed out that since blacks could not testify or appear as witnesses against whites in court, they were left open to those who chose to rob, oppress or even murder them.<sup>9</sup> When the California State Senate failed to repeal these laws in 1862, repeal had passed the House; the *Appeal* encouraged blacks not to give up hope:

Despair not brethren. Another trial is all that is needed. 'We shall *Appeal* to the hearts and consciences' of the people. In the name of every age and sex we shall *Appeal* for right and justice. Despair not then, but hope on, hope ever.<sup>10</sup>



*The first black newspaper on the Pacific Coast was edited in part by Mifflin W. Gibbs. Known as the Mirror of the Times (opposite) it adopted the motto "Truth Crushed To 'The Earth Will Rise Again.'"*

The *Appeal* also had the first black woman reporter in the San Francisco Bay Area. J. Stella Martin's name appeared over a column which appeared in early editions of the *Appeal*. The column was called "Miscellaneous" and dealt with a variety of subjects and issues in the area on a "chit-chat" basis.

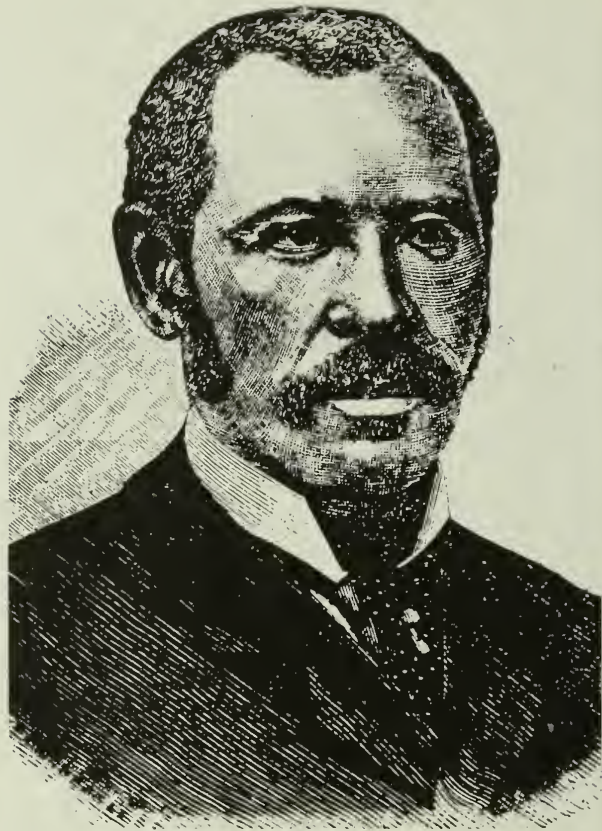
After the departure of Bell, Anderson took over the helm of editor in addition to the duties of owner and publisher. Under his guidance, the *Appeal* took on a more moderate tone. In 1863, the California Legislature repealed the Testimony and Witness Laws. Although Anderson had worked hard for the repeal and spread the news joyfully in his paper, he cautiously warned in an editorial:

... we should be more guarded than ever against committing any acts that might be construed, by the enemies of our advancement, as a consequence of the repeal of those unjust laws . . . We should be patient and conciliating, avoiding quarrels . . . And we must not always suppose that every offense that may be committed against us is altogether in consequence of our race.<sup>11</sup>

For a while the *Appeal* turned some of its attention to the problem of gaining suffrage for blacks in California. However, by 1867 Anderson "insisted that efforts by Negroes to win the vote in California were fruitless."<sup>12</sup> He also advocated that "all activists should retire and wait for Congress to pass legislation guaranteeing Negro suffrage."<sup>13</sup> At this point, the *Appeal* ceased to be a crusader for black suffrage in the state.

Anderson was forced to suspend publication of the *Appeal* from September 5, 1868 to August 27, 1870, because of financial difficulties. In 1879, he retired permanently as proprietor, publisher and editor of the *Appeal*. The paper was taken over by William H. Carter, the assistant editor, who generally carried on the conservative policies of Anderson until he closed shop in 1882.

Approximately three years after leaving the *Pacific*



*Appeal*, Philip A. Bell established the *Elevator* in April 1865. His paper and Anderson's *Pacific Appeal* would provide the black and white communities of San Francisco with contrasting views for nearly the next fourteen years.

Bell had left the *Appeal* after only three months. Most scholars of the era contribute this split to severe personality conflicts. Bell was considered a "militant" for his time, while Anderson preferred a more tactful and diplomatic approach to the "black" problems in California and the rest of the country.

Clashes between these two black editors are typified by the following exchange of editorials concerning leadership at a previously held Colored Convention. Bell stated in an editorial:

The action of mr. anderson [*sic* or on purpose] at the late convention is but a repetition of his course at the Convention of 1865 and is evidence of his inconsistency of character, and his desire to rule or ruin. If he cannot be the head and front of any movement, however good, he will overthrow and oppose it if possible.<sup>14</sup>

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Where lulling waves break

Not to the desert plain  
Where man has never trod:

There are birds in the woodland below  
 My heart is torn with the

There is life on the foam flecked sand  
He seems a surfer too.

There is life in the tooting pipes  
That educe the musician's grief.

But go to the crowded court,

On whose the cross-cap's gleaming  
Is hollowed, faded, dim.

One—if there could be but one—  
 Whose the pleasure, pleasure's word.

Written and Published for the  
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At an adjourned meeting of the  
 good citizens of Toronto, called to

Legislative Council on the 10th inst., following preamble and resolutions:

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PRAMOLE  
Whomsoever It has pleased Col. Pru

His Excellency, the Governor (to

Dismissed from the same for connivance  
at the execution of Aubrey Lenton, &c.

relative to the colored citizens of t

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should be kept separate, and not allow

them should be founded in the Micronesia Islands, or some other place." I

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tured, it was colored men who guard  
his person and household, not one

was his election to the distinguished

gains, have been accumulated from a  
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And, therefore, R has pleased Almighty  
God, to enlighten the understanding

... have given, namely:—to be free  
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... Therefore, it is the

309

309



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VOL. I.

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### CONTENTS.

Page 1—Prospectus (Column) ..... 1  
Salutatory ..... 2  
Our Proprietor ..... 3  
Our Name ..... 4  
Correspondents ..... 5  
Government ..... 6  
The Events of the Day ..... 7  
Machinery of Justice ..... 8  
Almost Another Victim ..... 9  
Right of Testimony ..... 10  
Our Persecution ..... 11  
Our First Number ..... 12  
Our Object ..... 13  
The Lament Visitor ..... 14  
Selfishness and Monopoly ..... 15  
No Adversity ..... 16  
San Francisco Literary Institute ..... 17  
Business Notes ..... 18  
Marriages, &c. ..... 19  
Marriages and Deaths ..... 20  
Advertisements ..... 21  
Poetry ..... 22  
Domestic Summary ..... 23  
The News ..... 24

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BY A SINGLE GENTLEMAN, A FIRM, who has been in business for many years, and who has a large capital, and who is desirous of establishing a branch office in the city of San Francisco, and who is desirous of having a partner who is desirous of having a share in the profits of the business.

## SALUTATORY.

The now more than a quarter of a century since we first assumed editorial duties. During that period nearly a generation of mankind have been born, lived and passed away, and we are spared by the memories of it to renew again our labors in a land the only known in geography, or in the tales of travelers and distant voyagers.

We were then the humble assistant of that father of Colored Editors, the late Rev. Samuel F. B. Smith, whose vigorous mind and lucidly connected our otherwise inefficient labors. We were afterwards joined by that ripe scholar and finished gentleman, Dr. James McCune Smith, who still continues to enlighten the world with his vigorous and judicious pen, and well-known Californian. He is likewise acquainted with journalism, having been for some years, Correspondent and Editor of our Eastern papers, and was one of the founders and a contributor to that noble of Colored Californians, "The Mirror of the Times."

It is known in the Eastern States, under the name of "The Tall Son of Pennsylvania." With such a team we must go ahead.

Twenty years have elapsed since we parted from the Colored American, and we thought while there are so many younger men and able scholars than ourselves, we would never again be called upon to assume the arduous and onerous duties of an editor; but late events in otherwise, a Weekly Paper is needed in California as much as in the Atlantic States; one which will be the exponent of our views and principles, our defense against calumny and oppression, and our representative among one of the recognized institutions of Civilization.

Our friends have selected us for the position, and with great misgivings of our ability to meet the requirements demanded, and with many fears that we are behind the age in our ideas and opinions, we yield our armor and commend ourselves to the task, trusting in God that we will not be found wanting.

Not of our own will have we entered into this work for individual gain, or a white patron is a party to our boasted experience, we doubt our ability

to conduct a paper to the satisfaction of those we represent, or even of our most sanguine friends; others were either expected to please. It is then the urgency of the case which impels us, and having conceived we will continue, God willing, as long as our health, strength and means last, or until we find one more capable from education and ability than we are, but until such time arrives we will neither hesitate nor falter.

PHILIP A. BELL.

### Our Proprietor.

We have said above so much about our Editor, that we cannot refrain from introducing our Proprietor to our readers.

Stand forth, Mr. Proprietor. Reader, we will introduce Mr. Peter Anderson, an old and experienced journalist, and well-known Californian. He is likewise acquainted with journalism, having been for some years, Correspondent and Editor of our Eastern papers, and was one of the founders and a contributor to that noble of Colored Californians, "The Mirror of the Times."

It is known in the Eastern States, under the name of "The Tall Son of Pennsylvania." With such a team we must go ahead.

### OUR NAME.

A name should be indicative of some principle or design, should be of itself sufficient to explain some object or purpose, to express some attribute or quality, or commemorative of some event or circumstance. A name which does none of these things is a misnomer, or it apparently intends to disguise its object and mission.

We have nothing to disguise; we enter the field boldly, fearlessly, but with duty and calmness to appeal for the rights of the Colored Citizens of this State.

As we say in our Prospectus, our paper is devoted to the interests of the Colored People of California and to their moral, intellectual and political advancement.

It will advocate their rights, their claims to humanity and justice; it will expose the wrongs inflicted on them, and the dishonour under which they labor. It will urge on our armistice and commend ourselves to the task, trusting in God that we will not be found wanting.

of our State, are relics of barbarism and slavery, retard the wheels of justice, debase our manhood, and inflict irreparable injury on our rights and liberties.

We shall appeal to the hearts and consciences of our rulers, not to their passions and prejudices; we shall Appeal to their sense of right and justice, not to their feelings of pity and compassion.

We issue our first number a week in advance of our date, to give us time to organize our carrier's list. We shall thoroughly canvass the city, and deliver this number ourselves, to receive subscriptions and advertisements.

We start on our voyage without a single subscriber, but we must have, at least, one thousand subscribers, in less than six months. We will want to enlarge our paper soon, but we must have five hundred subscribers, before we can do that.

There are said to be six thousand Colored people in California, sufficient, if only one tenth subscribe, to support our paper; that proportion, six hundred, we must have within six months, for the remaining four hundred, we must depend on our neighbors on the northern coast.

Our price, fifteen cents, we know is high, but we can not afford it for less, without a large subscription list. As we say above, when we have five hundred subscribers, we will enlarge our paper or else, take a new price to ten cents.

Our paper will be for sale at the following places.

Mayflower Saloon,	Washington Street
Golden Eagle	Kearny "
Union Club Rooms,	Pacific "
Lodge House	" "
Georgia Restaurant,	Kearny "
Mr. H. Condit's,	Battery "

One copy 15 cents, two copies 25 cents, 1 month 50 cents. Subscriptions payable invariably in advance.

### Correspondence.

We have not made any arrangements for correspondents, but we will before the issue of our next number. We have friends in all parts of the State, as well as in Oregon, the Territories, and in British Columbia, many of whom corresponded with the Mirror of the Times, and some who labored with us in the days of the Colored American.

We shall expect not only their cooperation, but we must call upon all who feel that they have a share in the progress of the race.



The Pacific Appeal first appeared on April 5, 1862. It hoped to serve as an exponent of black "views and principles" and as a "defense against calumny and oppression."

Anderson replied in the *Appeal*:

... the writer shows his malignity by placing our name and the name of the paper in small characters ... he makes an excuse for his shortsighted action in the convention by his endeavor to suppress our address.<sup>15</sup>

On the political scene, Bell and Anderson also had different views. Both were strong Republicans; however, Bell favored the development of an independent black political bloc. Anderson advocated conciliatory action to integrate the mainstream of political activities. Bell warned, "The black voters will be seriously disappointed if the weak kneed conservative wing of the Republican Party shall be permitted to dictate a course to that great element of freedom."<sup>16</sup>

In the first issue of *The Elevator*, April 7, 1865, Bell explained why he had chosen the name *Elevator* and why the motto "Equality Before the Law" had been adopted:

OUR NAME is indicative of our object, we wish to elevate the oppressed of all nations and of every clime to the position of manhood and freedom. OUR MOTTO—We claim full "Equality Before The Law," we desire nothing more, we will be satisfied with nothing less."<sup>17</sup>

*The Elevator* quickly became known in the national circle of black journalists. Bell received praise from Eastern editors and publishers for his stands and hard hitting editorials. Frederick Douglass stated in a letter to Bell in 1868, "I'm glad to see you are still battling bravely."<sup>18</sup>

Bell continued to run the *Elevator* until he became ill in 1885 and was forced to retire. He is reported to have been cared for and supported by a group of ladies until his death in April 1889 at the age of eighty-one. The paper continued to be published by the Elevator Publishing Company until 1889.

After *The Pacific Appeal* ceased publication, *The Elevator* remained San Francisco's lone black news-

paper until 1884 when James E. Brown founded the *Vindicator*. The earliest edition of this paper available is Volume 3, Number 2 dated May 2, 1887. This indicates the paper began publishing in April 1884.

Brown had tried several business ventures in San Francisco prior to the newspaper business. He had operated a wood and coal yard, managed a pool hall and later a lunch room. Brown held the position of publisher and proprietor of the *Vindicator* while William A. Foulerton served as editor.

Although in competition with the *Elevator*, Brown and Foulerton agreed with Bell that independent action by blacks was a feasible plan for gaining recognition and participation in the Republican political party. However, they were not without some reservations on this issue and made it clear they favored integration not separatism. An editorial read in part:

There appears to be a rapidly increasing desire among the Colored Race in every part of the country, to form social and political clubs, and organizations. This is a move in the right direction, and meets with our full and entire sympathy, except in cases, where the object of the association is to preserve the identity of the Race . . . (These) we must distinctly, and emphatically condemn, as against the principles of the country, and the future welfare of the race.<sup>19</sup>

In 1887, the *Vindicator* launched a vicious attack against police brutality, corruption and prison conditions in the state. The following editorial appeared in the June 11 issue:

For some weeks past we have been discussing the conditions of our very rotten police system and the workings thereof. This week we published in our news columns the account of a brutal outrage, the second of its kind committed by police and commented on in these columns within a few months. We say the second, by that we mean that it is the second coming under our particular notice, and investigated by us. We are aware at the same time that outrages and robberies are nightly committed by the police.<sup>20</sup>

# THE ELEVATOR,

A Weekly Journal of Progress.

"EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW."

Vol. I.

San Francisco, California, Friday, April 7, 1865.

No. 1.

The editorial went on to explain. "A man's first object in entering the force is to make money, and to enter it he has to be possessed of a certain amount of underhanded influence which is known as a political pull." The incident to which this editorial referred concerned the alleged beating, robbery and jailing by a policeman of an injured man seeking help.

In the same issue, the *Vindicator* carried a short article headlined "To The Grand Jury." The article read in part:

GENTLEMEN: We draw your very special attention to this issue of which each of you receives a copy. The following are a few bawdy houses and gambling shops enjoying immunity from police interference for what reason the police commissioners are doubtless better able to tell than we are.<sup>21</sup>

The paper listed the names and addresses of nine such establishments and concluded: "These are only a few gentlemen. Next week we hope to be able to give you a complete list." Due to broken files of the newspaper, the results of this crusade are uncertain.

When the sordid conditions at Folsom Prison were made public, the *Vindicator* loudly voiced its support for prison reforms and declared: "The recent disclosures made by State Prison Director Filcher have revealed a state of affairs unparalleled in the history of modern brutality and atrocity."<sup>22</sup>

The *Vindicator* had no motto or slogan to identify it

as a black "protest" or "cause" publication; however, it took its place alongside the *Elevator* and fought for human rights in California until it closed its doors in 1896.

To this point all black newspaper editors and publishers agreed that it would be through politics and protest that blacks would receive some relief from their racial, economic and educational problems. However, Robert Charles O'Harra Benjamin had other ideas and a different philosophy.

Benjamin came to the Bay Area with an impressive list of journalistic credentials. Born in the West Indies, he had been educated at Oxford in England and associated with several newspapers in the East and South. On April 19, 1890, he established the San Francisco *Sentinel*, which would express far different views from any previous black newspaper published in the area. Francis N. Lortie, Jr. pointed out in his 1970 thesis (University of San Francisco) that, "the *Sentinel* clearly called for a retreat from protest, and instead of politics, it urged blacks to concentrate on their uplift through acquiring property, wealth, and social respectability."<sup>23</sup> Although staunchly Republican, the paper did not see politics as a means to the end of discrimination and prejudice. An editorial published in 1890 proclaimed:

The only salvation for the colored American, is in industrial education, husbandry and wealth. Religion and

The masthead for *The Elevator* (opposite) proclaimed "Equality Before The Law." Below, the newspaper's editor Philip A. Bell.



politics will take care of themselves. Colored men must get down to first principles and work, if they desire to succeed.<sup>24</sup>

There is no doubt that the *Sentinel* advocated the building of a black aristocratic society in the Bay Area. Even in the South the paper maintained that the greatest protection of blacks would come from "acquiring money, property and education."<sup>25</sup> On the social scene, the paper made itself clear on the issues of social distinctions among blacks in the Bay Area. The following is an excerpt from an editorial published in December 1890:

We said in a recent issue of the *Sentinel* that all Negroes should not be placed in the same category. We attended—not long ago—a social gathering and I saw a mixture of people, good, bad, and indifferent, which it has seldom been our misfortune to encounter. The conglomeration of vice and virtue, reputable and dis-

reputable characters was a "sight to behold." We believe the time has arrived when some sort of distinction should be made at our social affairs. We believe the disreputable characters should be excluded from these places, and that strangers with nothing to commend them and without references should not be "expected." We call upon the respected men and women of this community to commence a vigorous welfare in this direction.<sup>26</sup>

The editorial went on to say, "the purification of our social system has become an imperative duty, . . . and those who strive to enter polite society must first acquire habits of refinement and gentility." The editorial explained how this should be achieved: "In short, he (the Negro) must clothe himself with all the commitants of civilization. If he does this, no question of race or color will be raised against him. Prejudice and injustice will vanish as does the morning dew before the noon-day sun."

Although the *Sentinel* was founded by Benjamin in April 1890, the December 9 issue listed A. A. Collins as editor and publisher and Charles R. Persons as local editor. The *Sentinel* was published until 1891.

The reason for its short life or the acceptance of its views by the black populace of California is impossible to determine. It is certain, however, that the *Sentinel* had entered into very heavy competition with the established *Elevator* and *Vindicator* vying for support from the Bay Area's small (2,000 plus) black population.

The *Sentinel* could be called the last of the black philosophical newspapers established in the area. Although they would continue to fight for the rights of blacks in America and seek solutions to black problems, future publications moved toward a more businesslike approach to news. The first of this new breed, and the last black newspaper to be founded in San Francisco before the turn of the century, was the *Western Outlook*.

Founded September 1, 1894, the earliest edition available (January 4, 1896) lists Joseph S. Francis and



J. L. Derrick as editors. The paper billed itself as "A Journal Devoted To The Negro On The Pacific Coast And The Betterment Of His Condition." It carried several special columns devoted to news briefs concerning black residents of Oakland, San Jose, Sacramento, Stockton, Redlands, Woodland and Portland, Oregon, as well as San Francisco.

Judging from the issues available, the *Outlook* was not dedicated to any special local crusades. However, several articles appeared concerning racial issues in other parts of the country. Most of these accounts concerned lynchings, which the paper vigorously condemned on its editorial pages.

In politics, the *Outlook* was true to the "Grand Old Party," in supporting William McKinley for president and Theodore Roosevelt for vice-president in 1900, the paper proudly announced: "There are more than 200 Afro-American newspapers publishing [maybe somewhat inflated] in the United States, and of these but six are supporting the democratic ticket."<sup>27</sup>

Apparently enjoying some degree of prosperity, Francis and Derrick moved the main office of the *Outlook* across the Bay to Oakland in June of 1911 leaving a branch office in San Francisco. The paper continued to be published at least until 1928.

Oakland's first black newspaper had been established some years earlier in 1897: Called the *Oakland Sunshine*, early editions list J. A. Wilde as editor. However, J. M. Bridges and E. Marshall became co-editors and publishers in 1909.

The paper strongly supported the establishment of an all-black town near Bakersfield called Allensworth. Such a project had been started in 1908 by Colonel Allen Allensworth, a former slave, educator and retired Army Colonel. The *Sunshine* commented in 1913: "Allensworth as a community is an assurance, and it does not require an optimist to see a great future in store for this race community."<sup>28</sup>

This community did not become a successful reality as the *Sunshine* had hoped.

Also, the paper was not in total disagreement with the views of Marcus Garvey and his "Back to Africa Movement." The following editorial appeared in 1922:

The Back to Africa Movement is alright if we are to make the appeal to our Colored brethren from a (love of Fatherland) standpoint . . . But if we go around the country decrying the white races of the earth and calling on the darker races to come together, common sense will tell you there will be opposition from the powers that be . . . We are therefore convinced that this movement should be made in a sane, calm and business-like manner, combined with our desire to redeem our Fatherland, and this we have a perfect right in the name of justice and loyalty to do.<sup>29</sup>

The *Sunshine* expressed a deep concern for the black press in California. The following editorial appeared in 1915 chiding two feuding black newspapers.

We are very much astonished to learn of the war raging between our contemporaries, the Los Angeles *Eagle* and the *Western Outlook* of San Francisco . . . We do not know about the merits of the affair, but we had hoped that the occasion was near for a union or press association of Negro papers of the state, but if this is to be continued we can hardly hope further. Brother editors, please consider your mission and what the public expects of us and lay aside these paper fights. The space and time are too precious.<sup>30</sup>

Bridges not only hoped for an association of black newspapers in the state, but later called for a consolidation or merger of some of the black papers being published in the Bay Area. "What we need is a co-operation and there is no better time to start than now. The high cost of paper and printing making it imperative that we have one big paper in Oakland and one in San Francisco,"<sup>31</sup> he explained in an editorial. This co-operation never became a reality which could have led to the Bay Area's first black daily newspaper. The *Sunshine* was published in Oakland until 1922.



Robert Charles O'Harra Benjamin's newspaper, the *San Francisco Sentinel*, urged blacks to concentrate on their uplift by acquiring wealth, property and social respectability.

*The San Francisco Vindicator led an attack on police brutality, corruption and prison conditions.*

# San Francisco Vindicator.

SAN FRANCISCO, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1888

No. 6

VOL. 5.

[illegible]

The other two are people not nearly so well known, but perhaps quite as well worth knowing. The first is a great traveller, Col. Prevencio, who has made a most interesting tour of the interior of Asia, and has added much to geographical knowledge of that vast and unexplored tract of Russia. He has lately been in Tashkent, a Russian Asiatist frontier city, and has been very highly honoured there. He has recently made himself a great though not a wholly correct reputation in Europe, by painting little pictures which show things exactly as they are, and not as they are usually represented. He is very powerful, so much so that the inferior people do not like him. He has recently come to the United States and was perhaps sent to San Francisco and exhibited some of his pictures. He is a very interesting and very talkative person, and has been in very little doubt as to what he has seen and heard.

Another group of remarkable persons disappeared some time ago at the last outbreak of Africa, 1826 or 1827, and have not been seen since. They were a party of unknown number sent about there by the Government, and returned home.

was excused for preferring to wait and see whether the performance corresponds. A new broom sweeps clean, and the new sheriff has a two years' term is considered to be worth about \$60,000 to the Sheriff himself. All the evils mentioned in the above article, and more too, are bound to be met with. If Mr. Laumeyer will keep the promise, the "Post" has been making for him, he will be a very popular Sheriff with lawyers and with litigants, and he shall walk with reform with interest.

### The Iron Workers

The different iron trades of San Francisco have learned that the Russian Iron Works are going on strike in Russia, and that the Russian States and Empire. This the iron workers do not like, and they have intervened. Mr. Moore, superintendent at the Russian Iron Works on the subject. Mr. Moore says that the Russian Iron Works have no quarrel with the iron workers, for the effect that the reason why the contract was being away from the city was that the work could be

[illegible]

IT STANDS AT THE HEAD-  
THE  
LIGHT RUNNING

NEW  
WOODWORTH  
AND  
NEW  
ATTACHMENTS

WORLD

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**MARKET ST., Opp. Depot.**







Oakland's first black newspaper, the Oakland Sunshine, supported the establishment of an all-black California town to be called Allensworth.

By the end of the nineteenth century at least eight black publications had been established in the Bay Area. Some of these publications managed to survive for several years while others lasted only a short time.

At one period, 1890-1891, three black newspapers were serving the black and white communities of San Francisco. From 1856 to 1900 there was only an approximate four year period in which a black newspaper was not published, 1858-1862. From 1862 to 1900 at least two black newspapers were serving the area at any one time. Two of these papers, the *Western Outlook* and the *Oakland Sunshine* would carry their activities into the twentieth century. From a mass communication standpoint, the black communities of San Francisco and Oakland enjoyed a very healthy climate.

How much these black publications influenced any change of events during the period is impossible to determine; however, there is no doubt they were in the thick of the battle. Although the black publications of this time varied in shape, size and content, they were all dedicated to a cause that would keep the black presses rolling into the twentieth century. Some battles had been won, but the war was not over.

All of the illustrations are courtesy of the author

## Notes

1. Garland Penn, *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969); Martin E. Dann, *The Black Press 1827-1890* (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1971) and John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1974) refer to the *Mirror of the Times* as being founded in 1855. Philip Montesano in his thesis *Some Aspects of the Free Negro Question in San Francisco: 1849-1870* (University of San Francisco, 1967) gives the date of Sept. 13, 1865. However, available issues of the paper indicate it was first published October 31, 1865. This date is arrived at by counting backwards from the volume, number and date of an existing issue. The Volume 1, Number 49, August 22, 1857, issue of the *Mirror* indicates the first issue was October 31, 1856, provided it was published on a regular weekly basis.
2. Conventions were held by blacks in California from 1855 through 1857 to address and seek solutions to the problems they faced in the state.
3. Montesano, *Some Aspects*, p. 23.
4. *Mirror of the Times*, December 12, 1857.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *The Pacific Appeal*, April 5, 1862.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *The Pacific Appeal*, April 26, 1862.
11. *The Pacific Appeal*, March 21, 1863.
12. Francis N. Lortie, Jr., *San Francisco's Black Community 1870-1890: Dilemmas in the Struggle for Equality* (unpublished thesis, University of San Francisco, 1970), p. 35.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *The Elevator*, December 13, 1873.
15. *The Pacific Appeal*, December 20, 1873.
16. "The Beginning: The Spirit of the Early Black Press," *Encore*, June 20, 1977.
17. *The Elevator*, April 7, 1865.
18. *The Elevator*, June 5, 1868.
19. *The San Francisco Vindicator*, August 13, 1887.
20. *The San Francisco Vindicator*, June 11, 1887.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *The San Francisco Vindicator*, July 30, 1887.
23. Lortie, *Black Community*, p. 46.
24. *The Sentinel*, September 20, 1890.
25. Lortie, *Black Community*, p. 46.
26. *The Sentinel*, December 6, 1890.
27. *The Western Outlook*, November 3, 1900.
28. *The Oakland Sunshine*, December 27, 1913.
29. *The Oakland Sunshine*, February 25, 1922.
30. *The Oakland Sunshine*, November 13, 1915.
31. *The Oakland Sunshine*, February 25, 1922.



HIGHLIGHTING THE COLLECTION OF  
THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*by Gerrie E. Kahn*

This catalogue of the painting collection of the California Historical Society was researched and authored by Ms. Gerrie E. Kahn in fulfillment of her Masters Degree in the Museum Studies Program at John F. Kennedy University, San Francisco. Ms. Kahn's deep personal interest in the history of art and of California has resulted in an extensive catalogue of the CHS Collection.

The California Historical Society's collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century California art is an invaluable record of scenes from the California landscape. This is the first of four articles cataloguing this historically important and aesthetically beautiful collection. The series of articles will later be published in its entirety.

## Part I—YOSEMITE

The Yosemite Valley became the focal point of California landscape painting during the 1860s and 1870s. Its fabled beauty lured artists from everywhere to venture down its treacherous and precipitous trails, which were not much better than the original Indian paths.

The first white men to view the valley and all its wonders, including the nearby groves of giant Sequoias, were the members of a party of explorers led by famed scout and mountain man Joseph Reddeford Walker. On a trailblazing trip west to the Pacific in 1833, Reddeford's party crossed the Sierra along the Miwok-Mono Indian trail on the rugged divide between the Merced and Tuolumne watersheds. The travellers were evidently quite impressed by what they saw, according to a written account of the journey, but did not name the valley. More direct routes were found for the emigrant wagons traveling west and the valley was left undisturbed. It took the Gold Rush to effect the "rediscovery" of the valley. Miners' activities in the Mariposa foothills spurred the resistance of the Indians residing there. In March of 1851, the Mariposa Battalion led by Major James D. Savage, whose Mariposa trading post had been burned and pillaged, went into the valley to quell the disturbances and subdue the Indians for transfer to the Fresno reservation.

Savage's group too, was awestruck by what they beheld; one member wrote: "As I looked, a peculiar exalted sensation seemed to fill my whole being, and I found my eyes in tears with emotion."<sup>1</sup> They considered naming the area Paradise Valley but eventually decided on Yosemite, to perpetuate the name of the local Indian tribe that had lived in the area. Yosemite closely resembled the word for grizzly

bear, *u-z'u-ma-ti*, a name which some of the Indians called themselves, but there was confusion for years among various early spellings.

James Mason Hutchings, publisher of *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine*, organized the first "tourist party" into the valley in 1855. Wanting to verify the tales of scenic wonders he had been hearing for himself, he proceeded from Mariposa with two Indian guides and forty-niner landscape artist, Thomas Ayres. They followed the old Indian trail via Wawona and on into the valley at Inspiration Point. They spent five days exploring, sketching and measuring. Ayres's drawings were the first ever done of Yosemite, and the first printed description by Hutchings of the valley appeared in the *Mariposa Gazette* of July 12, 1855. Once it had been pictured and publicized, the valley became a mecca for tourists who wanted to view Hutchings' and Ayres's accounts for themselves. The artists who flocked to Yosemite were each, in his own way, challenged to capture and record its overwhelming beauty on canvas.

The name Yosemite was officially used by Congress in the 1864 proclamation granting the valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove to the State of California as a recreational reserve. This epoch-making decision, The Yosemite Act, which was signed by Abraham Lincoln, was of great significance. Carl P. Russell, Superintendent of the Park from 1947 to 1952 states: "I should say that first and foremost among the successes is the accomplishment in stating in *federal law for the first time* the concept that there are places of beauty and of scientific interest which individuals of private interests have no right to appropriate to themselves. In other words the 1864 protection of Yosemite



constitutes the birth of the National Park idea.”<sup>2</sup>

John Muir, the eminent naturalist and writer, first came to Yosemite in 1868. He worked as a sheep herder and also in James Hutchings’ sawmill while he explored his “Range of Light.” He painted his romantic pictures of Yosemite with words as well as the artists did. “. . . the glorious valley, arrayed in its winter robes; the descent from the heights of the booming, out bounding avalanche-like magnificent waterfalls; the coming and going of the noble storms; the varying songs of the falls; the growth of frost crystals on the rocks and leaves and snow; the sunshine sifting through them in rainbow colors; climbing every Sunday to the top of the walls for views of the mountains in glorious array along the summit of the range. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Muir’s consuming interest in conserving and protecting the area and his intense prodding of influential people led Congress to expand the boundaries of the original grant; in 1890 the area surrounding the valley was made a National Park. In 1906 California ceded back the valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove.

Again and again, year after year, artists were drawn to the “incomparable valley” that so well fulfilled the ideals of romantic realism prevalent in nineteenth-century landscape art. As Paul C. Johnson says in his book *Yosemite*, “the stark contrast between the eternal granite rising above a gentle living landscape of forest, meadow, and shimmering river wakes a religious response in many beholders and more than one observer has likened the valley to a great cathedral.”<sup>4</sup> The scenic beauty of Yosemite, so fortunately protected almost from the beginning, transcends time in its universal effect not only on the artist, but on writer, photographer and tourist as well.

On the part of some, however, there was another view regarding this rather rapturous infatuation with

the wonders of Yosemite. Ambrose Bierce, the acerbic San Francisco newspaper columnist, who kept San Franciscans alternately amused and inflamed for more than forty years with his pithy comments on the passing scene, acidly remarked: “It is with grim satisfaction that we record the destruction by fire of Bierstadt’s celebrated picture of Yosemite Valley. The painting has been a prolific parent of ten thousand abominations. We have had Yosemite in oils, in watercolors, in crayon, in chalk and charcoal until in our very dreams we imagine ourselves falling from the summit of El Capitan or descending in spray from the Bridalview cataract. Besides, that picture has incited more unpleasant people to visit California than all our conspiring hotel-keepers could compel to return. . . . We are glad a blow has finally been struck at the root of immigration. If we can now corral Hill’s painting and send East all the rest we may hope for peace. If not, we trust some daring spirit will be found to blow up the infernal valley with Giant powder or glycerine soap.”<sup>5</sup>

## Notes

1. Paul C. Johnson, *Yosemite* (Tokyo and Palo Alto: Kodansha International Ltd., 1970), p. 19.
2. Paul C. Johnson, *Yosemite: Saga of a Century, 1864-1964* (Oakhurst, California: Sierra Star Press, 1964), p. 7.
3. Carl P. Russell, *100 Years in Yosemite* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947), p. 153.
4. Johnson, *Yosemite*, p. 19.
5. *San Francisco News-Letter*, September 4, 1869.

*The Paintings*

## **James Alden (1810-1877)**

Valley of Yosemite California 1859

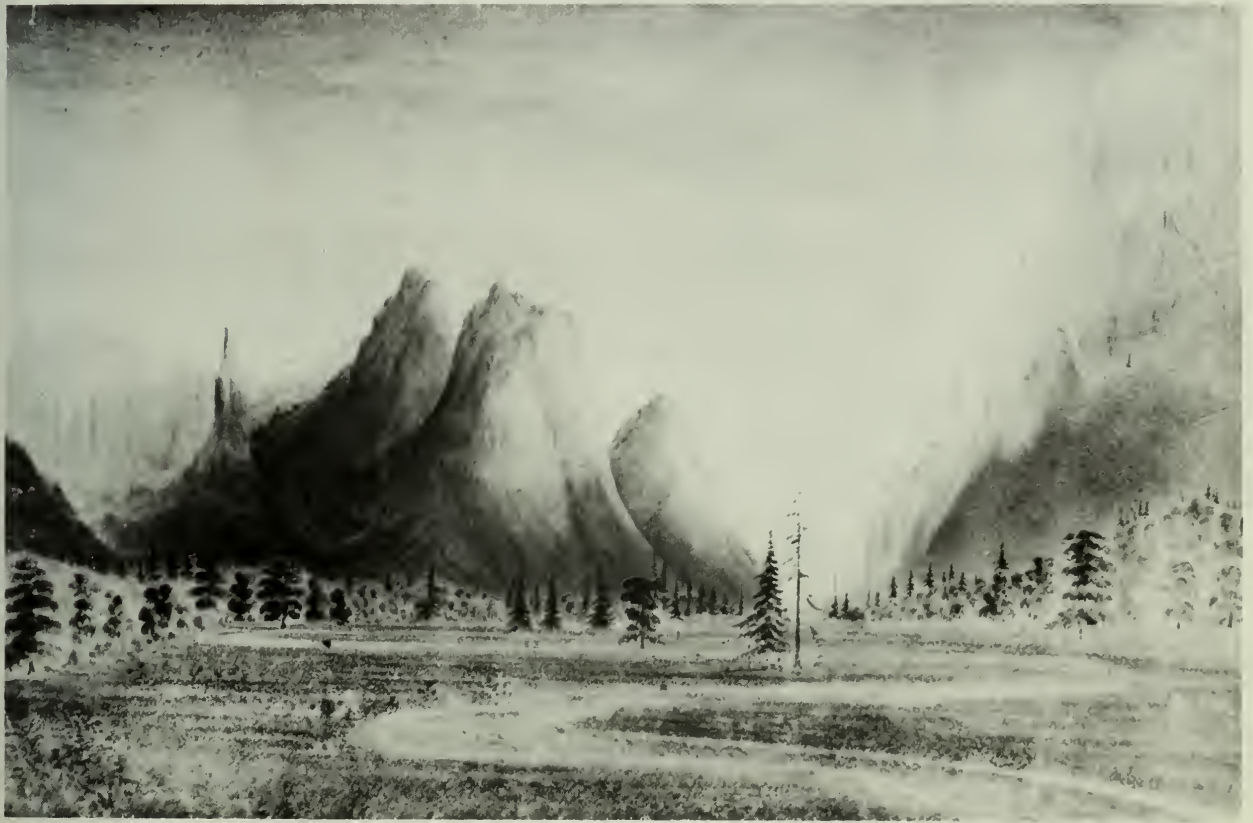
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*Watercolor 12 x 18 inches, CHS Purchase*

Among the earliest views of California are those of James Alden, a descendant of *Mayflower* pilgrims, John and Priscilla Alden. He joined the United States Navy, which brought him to California from Maine in 1842. He was in charge of surveying and charting the Sacramento River and was later assigned to the West Coast Survey in 1848. This survey extended from the Mexican border to Canada. He worked on it until the outbreak of the Civil War.

Prior to the advent of the camera, which came into general use for field work in the late 1860s, the Coast Survey depended upon the services of on-site artists such as Alden. Admiral Alden produced an unknown number of watercolors and sketchbooks in his wide travels. Imposing some artistic license, this delicate watercolor imparts the awesomeness and quietude encountered in the valley of Yosemite by these early surveyors.





## Albert Bierstadt (1830-1920)

### On the Merced River

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*Oil on canvas 36 x 52 inches*

Albert Bierstadt reached California on his second trip west in 1863. He and his traveling companion, Fitz Hugh Ludlow, were eager to see Yosemite. A party was organized, and artists Virgil Williams and Enoch Wood Perry accompanied Bierstadt and Ludlow along with a metallurgist named John Hewston. They entered the Valley by way of the old Mariposa Trail and spent the summer sketching and camping along the river. The journalist Ludlow wrote of the artists' efforts: ". . . Sitting in their divine workshop by a little after sunrise, our artists began laboring by that only method which can ever make a true painter or a living landscape, color studies on the spot . . . I will assert that during their seven weeks in camp in the Valley, they learned more and gained greater material for future triumphs than they had gotten all their lives before at the feet of the greatest masters."<sup>1</sup>

This particular painting, although undated, was done by Bierstadt in his studio from the sketches he made, most likely on his 1863 Yosemite trip. He depicts a calm, placid stretch of the river lined with tall granite cliffs and trees, probably one of the group's several campsites.

Some of the most magnificent waterfalls in the Sierra, including Vernal, Nevada and Yosemite Falls are on the Merced's course. Over eons of time, the Yosemite gorge was cut by the Merced River. During the Ice Age glaciers widened the chasm, sculpting the cliffs and peaks in the process. When the glaciers melted, a lake formed on the valley floor, which eventually dried, leaving a smooth grassy meadow.

1. Gordon Hendricks, *Albert Bierstadt* (Fort Worth, Texas: Amon Carter Museum, 1973), p. 132.





## William Hahn (1829-1887)

Yosemite Valley from Glacier Point 1874

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*Oil on canvas 27¼ x 46 inches, gift of Albert Bender*

In this genre painting, Hahn has depicted a party of tourists viewing the panorama of Yosemite Valley from the superb vantage of Glacier Point. Within sight are the Merced Canyon with Nevada and Vernal Falls in the background and the Tenaya Canyon crowned by Half Dome. Beyond is the snow-covered crest of the Sierra. The guide is readying a picnic lunch as members of the group take in the spectacular scene. A rather adventurous couple dangle their legs over the edge of the point while one member seems unimpressed with his surroundings as he naps in the shade of the tethered horses. A pile of debris including empty bottles, boxes and a *Daily Alta California* newspaper, give evidence of previous tourist parties.

The route to Glacier Point, originally a horse toll trail, was built by James McCauley and was known as the Four Mile Trail. A small shack for shelter against the biting wind had existed at the top, but was replaced in 1878 by the Glacier Point Mountain House, a larger, more comfortable rest house built by McCauley. In 1882 the trail was widened for wagon access, and in 1917 the Glacier Point Hotel was built. The Mountain House and the Hotel existed until 1969 when they both burned to the ground. Glacier Point was the site of the famous "fire-fall" which was originated by McCauley and became a nightly occurrence in the early 1900s under D.A. Curry. The spectacular firefall (a cascade of glowing coals that was spilled over the precipice) was discontinued in 1968 by the Park service as not being in keeping with the natural surroundings and intent of Yosemite as a National Park.

Glacier Point acquired its surprisingly appropriate name in 1868, prior to acceptance of the theory that glacial action was responsible for the rugged peaks and valleys of Yosemite.



## Thomas Hill (1829-1908)

Yosemite Valley, Bridalveil Fall

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*Oil on canvas 16 3/4 x 22 3/4 inches, CHS Purchase*

Thomas Hill was one of the major painters of Yosemite and his works found their way all over the world. Hill's panorama, though on a relatively small scale, hints at the impact of his six-by-ten-foot monumental canvases. These stunning works, of the same subject matter and style as this small painting, seem to give the viewer the feeling that he is standing in Yosemite itself.

Yosemite Valley, a nine-mile-long, mile-wide glacial cut gorge, whose granite walls rise two to four thousand feet nearly straight up from its meadow floor, is not a unique phenomenon in the Sierra range; but it, of all the glacial gorges, "exhibits the sheerest walls, the most distinctive monoliths, and flattest floor, the widest meadows, the finest array of waterfalls."<sup>1</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson called it, "the only spot I have ever found that came up to brag."<sup>2</sup> The Merced River meanders through the valley fed by a dozen waterfalls dropping down the granite peaks on its way to join the San Joaquin near Modesto.

Bridalveil Fall was given its romantic name by Warren Baer, editor of the *Mariposa Democrat*, on August 5, 1856. James M. Hutchings said that he suggested the name when he and Thomas Ayres made their first visit to the Yosemite Valley in 1855. The Indians called the falls, *Pohono*, which was the local name for the Miwok group in the vicinity. The first depiction of Bridalveil Fall was in Ayres's panoramic view of the Yosemite Valley; the accuracy of this view was later attested to by the first early photographs of Charles L. Weed and Carleton E. Watkins.

1. Sunset Books Staff, ed., *Northern California*, (Menlo Park, California: Lane Book Company 1964), p. 121.
2. *Ibid.*





## Virgil Williams (1830-1886)

Along the Mariposa Trail 1863

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*Oil on canvas 42 x 36 inches, gift of  
Mr. and Mrs. Alan K. Browne*

One of his largest and best, this painting by Virgil Williams was recently rediscovered. It depicts some of the members of Bierstadt's Yosemite party of 1863. Albert Bierstadt himself is the figure with the sketchbook under his arm. Besides Bierstadt and Williams, other members of the party shown on the painting are Enoch Wood Perry, another artist, and eastern journalist Fitz Hugh Ludlow. They are shown camped along the placid, tree-lined Merced under the towering granite monolith of Sentinel Rock. The party trekked the Mariposa Trail into the Yosemite Valley for seven weeks during the summer of 1863.

The old mining camp of Mariposa was the starting point for Hutchings' journey in 1855 and for a number of following parties. Milton and Huston Mann, two brothers who had joined one of these sightseeing expeditions, saw the commercial possibilities of having some kind of road leading into the valley to serve the great influx of tourists that would surely be coming. They began the grading of a horse toll trail which followed old Indian paths from the South Fork of the Merced into the Yosemite Valley. Galen Clark, another 1855 Yosemite tourist, built a camp for travelers along the arduous fifty-mile trail. Clark's station later became known as Wawona. The trail's highest elevation, Old Inspiration Point, gave the traveler his first breathtaking panoramic view of Yosemite Valley. From there the trail descended sharply to the valley floor near the base of Bridalveil Fall. The Mann Brothers' Mariposa Trail was later purchased by Mariposa County and made free for public use. Later a stage road and eventually a comfortable modern highway were constructed over the old trail.





*“Your picture hangs in*



# my salon”

## The Letters of Gertrude Atherton to Ambrose Bierce

Although she wrote and published prolifically, Gertrude Atherton jealously guarded her inner life. Remote and formal, she tried to dictate from what angle and through which lens she should be viewed by the public, loudly protesting the use of any publicity photograph of herself she considered unflattering. To further confound a would-be biographer, most records from the first fifty years of her life were destroyed in the fire following the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Because of this, what *has* survived becomes especially precious. The letters written to her by the well-known author Ambrose Bierce have unfortunately been lost. But, her spirited side of the correspondence endures, allowing a uniquely intimate look at a complex relationship and an elusive woman.

The first words Ambrose Bierce addressed to Gertrude Atherton were accusing. The year was 1889. Mrs. Atherton, a widow in her early thirties, had left San Francisco and was struggling to make a name for herself as a writer in New York. Bierce, fifteen years older than his distant addressee, was living in the Bay Area as a literary lion of legendary ferocity. His San Francisco *Examiner* column “Prattle” was quoted by many, read by all. In it he named the objects of his wrath and crucified them in perfectly turned phrases. He sometimes signed himself “A.G.” Bierce, and it had been remarked that the initials stood for “Almighty God.”

Mrs. Atherton’s newly published second novel, *Hermia Suydam*, was earning a reputation as a shocking book. “Not fitted to be brought into the family,” muttered the reviewer for the *New York Times*, while the *New York World* proclaimed it

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Emily Leider, a San Francisco based poet and literary critic, is at work on a biography of Gertrude Atherton. She is a Senior Editor of the *San Francisco Review of Books*.

*Controlling and self-conscious, Gertrude Atherton tried always to be photographed from the same flattering angle (right profile) as seen here. This photograph was used as the frontispiece to The Doomsman and is probably the same picture she sent to Ambrose Bierce in arranging their first meeting.*

*"I hate you generally, but I think you would be interesting."*

prurient, "the product of a diseased mind."<sup>1</sup> On the west coast, the San Francisco *Argonaut* took particular interest in the novel, whose author had made her first scandal in its pages with the anonymously published *Randolphs of Redwoods*, and whose publisher Fred Somers had been an *Argonaut* co-founder. The *Argonaut* claimed that *Hernia Suydam* had been studied by a panel of eight learned doctors of letters, who had pronounced it "the most immoral novel in the English language."<sup>2</sup>

Without having bothered to read this story of a drab and penniless young New York woman who uses the fortune she inherits to transform herself into a beauty of irresistible allure, Bierce charged Mrs. Atherton with being a sensationalist, a fad follower and a publicity seeker. Her answer bristles with anger:

I think it is very nasty of you to condemn me without a hearing & to bracket me with a crowd I despise upon no better authority than sensational criticism. For "the blaze of controversy" and the "blare of bugles," I am in no way responsible, further than that I happened to write a book which gave the critics something to talk about. I have never incited a line of advertising or heralding; there is no necessity.<sup>3</sup>

She goes on to defend herself as a depicter of men and women as they really are, and to argue that it was mere coincidence that the book came out during a fad for erotic fiction. She adds that his critical response is one she held in esteem. "I was sorry . . . that you should go for me, because I have the highest respect

for your opinion . . . and I would rather get my hard knocks elsewhere." That was as close as she could come to revealing how deeply cut she felt.

More than a year elapsed before their next exchange. Tired of New York's rude critics and nay-saying editors, Mrs. Atherton fled to the Europe she had long dreamed about. In France she completed *Los Cerritos*, her first California novel, making sure that her heroine, this time, had "an instinct for chastity." When she continued to London she found British publishers for her novels, friendly reviews, and a warm reception from other writers. Following the peripatetic pattern she would maintain for decades, she briefly touched down in New York before returning to San Francisco in the summer of 1890.

Much had changed. Stephen Franklin, the grandfather who had lent her a thousand dollars three years before and seen her off at the train when she left for New York, had recently died. Daughter Muriel, now twelve, had been left in the care of her paternal grandmother, Dominga De Goñi Atherton, who lay critically ill. Gertrude wanted to bid her farewell, and to make new arrangements for Muriel's care. She also had plans to visit Spanish-Mexican settlements all over California, in search of characters and stories. There was a great deal to see, a lot of catching up to do. And there was Mr. Bierce to confront.

She wasted little time, and bowed to no convention, in seizing the initiative and boldly addressing him:

My dear Mr. Bierce:

I want very much to meet you, but how shall I manage it? My mother-in-law is in Menlo and my family over here [in Ross.] Could you come over here some afternoon on the one o'clock train? It is a bore to have to go to the country to call on a woman, but I have nothing else to suggest. There is a comfortable hammock under the trees and when you are tired of talking to me you can go to sleep . . . I hate you generally, but I think you would be interesting.



*The literary lion of the Bay Area, Ambrose Bierce was fifteen years older than Mrs. Atherton when he began their correspondence.*



*Gertrude Atherton's letter to Bierce telling him she would arrive on the 8:30 train. She also wished to know if there were many other trains so that if they fought "beyond endurance" a hasty exit could be arranged.*

Bierce, an asthmatic whose health deteriorated when subjected to the fogs and winds of San Francisco, was living in Sunol, in the East Bay. He responded with a counter-invitation—she should come to visit him—and a query about her appearance. What did she look like? She replied, "I am a tearing beauty, of course. I wonder you had not heard it before."

Good looks, their own and other people's, counted. Mrs. Atherton loved posing for her portrait and writing lavish descriptions of the exquisite skin, carriage and dress of her heroines. As for Bierce, even when living on one of the mountain-tops to which he gravitated, he would spend hours on his grooming, and was said to have shaved daily "from head to foot."<sup>4</sup> An unabashed worshipper at the shrine of feminine loveliness, he wrote to one woman he had never met, "If I don't know a woman I want her beautiful—that is my right."<sup>5</sup> Bierce and Gertrude Atherton were keenly aware of each other, from the start, as attractive members of opposite sexes, and they engaged in the kind of verbal sparring and playful confrontation that amounts to a courtship dance.

Mrs. Atherton did not immediately act on the invitation to visit Sunol, for the death of Dominga Atherton in September had intervened. "Being in mourning I am not paying calls at present, but I shall console myself by going up to Martinez and roaming among the tules at four in the morning." Perhaps it was a good thing, after all, that they had not yet met. "I feel a pang of relief at the fate I may have escaped. Think—think! but it is too dreadful for words!"

She confessed that his short story, "The Watcher by the Dead," had profoundly disturbed her. "That is the one thing I hate you for. It kept me awake for a week and I have been afraid to sleep alone ever since. This is not intended as a subtle and skillful compliment, but an honest and feminine appeal."

Conjuring an image of herself in bed was decidedly provocative, and she did it more than once. She had moved to San Francisco, leaving behind her relatives in Ross, and taken an apartment on Washington Street, "with a Spanish cook and an occasional Muriel." She told Bierce, "You are well out of San Francisco. I am pretty robust, but the wind smites my nerve centres. Today I am laid up with neuralgia, but cannot tell whether it is the wind or Joaquin Miller. He was here yesterday and told me to do my writing in bed, not to get up until noon. It would keep my backbone warm, which it appears is essential to composition."

They exchanged several letters before the much anticipated encounter took place. Mrs. Atherton made clear that Bierce should feel honored by her desire to meet him. "I seldom ask anyone, man or woman, to come to see me. I care for so little outside my work that I am afraid of boring people or being bored by them." Each year, she informed him, she found herself with fewer friends. But she had determined that he was "more interesting than most people."

A day was finally chosen, and as the visit approached she was filled with anxiety. Perhaps he would dislike her. He had made women-baiting a kind of second career, after all, missing no chance to decry in print their lack of virtue or intelligence, the deficiency in the "gray batter of their brainettes." Intellectual women and the women of the press (the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association had recently been formed) were particular targets of his abuse. Or perhaps the dashing Mr. Bierce, known to be something of a rake, would like her too much. What was she to expect from a man who has said, "I hate women and I love women, having an acute animosity to your sex and adoring each member of it?"<sup>6</sup> If they were going to clash in one another's presence as they already had on paper, she would be

Send me a photo-  
graph so that I can  
recognize  
me. I prefer to be  
seen.

313, Washington  
Tricent

Mr. Bierce  
Since takes the  
8.30 on Monday as  
the morning is always  
the pleasantest time  
in California and  
return at 8. You  
can expect me if  
it does not rain  
as I always do when  
I come up to my  
mind to. I have made  
up my mind I must  
go for some reason  
which I will tell you  
and for some reason  
which I must.

Lillian Atherton

prepared. "Tell me if there are numerous trains, so that if we fight beyond endurance I can go home and not sit and sulk on the platform."

For the following narrative of their first meeting heavy use has been made of Mrs. Atherton's account of it in *Adventures of a Novelist*. Though her facts are trustworthy, she clearly shaped the material to her own ends, minimizing her attraction to Bierce and her aggressiveness in pursuing him. When she made Bierce the model for a character in fiction he became the most arresting man she had ever seen, with a mouth that was "humourous, bitter, sensual, determined," and an appearance that suggested "virility in every angle," leaving the heroine "fascinated, piqued."<sup>7</sup> In the autobiography, it is Bierce who finds her irresistible. She never acknowledges her own ambivalence and seems unaware that she was

sending out mixed cues. She wanted him to fall in love, but not to make love to her. She was willing to risk literary scandal and social unconventionality, but not, finally, her "respectability."

On a Monday, probably in January of 1891, wearing "a very becoming blue frock," Mrs. Atherton arrived at 8:30 am at the Sunol train station, where Bierce greeted her. She had sent him a photograph so that he would easily recognize her, and she had no trouble spotting him. He was "about forty-nine at the time, a tall man, very thin and closely knit, with curly iron gray hair, a bristling moustache, beetling brows over frowning eyes, good features and beautiful hands." He was as impeccable in dress, as precise, fastidious and elegant, as he was known to be in composing a sentence. A point against him in Mrs. Atherton's eyes was that "he



*"If I ever summon up my courage to go to Sunol again I think I will take a bodyguard."*

looked too much like my father—what my mother would have called a typical Yank."

Although his personal life was in ruins—he had bitterly separated from his wife, and his older son had recently died at age sixteen in a love duel—Bierce was at the height of his professional popularity and power. Mrs. Atherton's was decidedly the lesser known, the more untried, talent. Her mere arrival showed bravado, for by 1891 standards it was daring for a woman to travel alone to pay a call on "the wickedest man in San Francisco." Willing to take the initiative, she wanted Bierce to understand at once that she had no intention of prostrating herself in worship at his feet. When she said as much he was less than delighted.

They were not alone at lunch. S.S. Chamberlain, managing editor of the San Francisco *Examiner* was present, lending an air of elegance and propriety. The worldly Mr. Chamberlain had been an editor of the New York *Herald* and a founder of *Le Matin* in Paris. With a monocle in his eye and a gardenia in his lapel, he lived up to his reputation for possessing the manner and dress of an English duke.<sup>8</sup> He eased the social flow by being "an easy and brilliant talker." But after lunch, Chamberlain disappeared. Bierce, pleading ill health, led Mrs. Atherton into his bedroom, looking "cynical and somewhat amused." She "did not turn a hair," but settled herself into the one comfortable chair, while Bierce stretched out on the bed.

Unwilling to be seduced, she defended herself with

a barrage of well-aimed verbal barbs, which Bierce returned in kind. What followed was a skirmish of wits worthy of Beatrice and Benedick.

He told her that although her writing showed promise, so far she had done nothing worth serious consideration. She retaliated with an attack on his stories, which "might be models of craftsmanship and style" and of the technique of horror, but were "so devoid of humanity that they fell short of true art, and would never make any but a limited appeal."

Bierce began dismembering the reputations of various highly regarded practitioners of the art of fiction. Meredith—on whom Mrs. Atherton had haughtily refused to call in England—he pronounced indecipherable. Stevenson was "nothing but a phrasemaker; his imagination was so thin it was all he could do to beat it into a novel of conventional length." Novels were a waste of time anyway. "The only form in which the perfection of art could be achieved as well as the effect of totality, was that of the short story."

Bierce's antipathy to the novel was well known. He believed its length worked against the aesthetic goal of unity. Several years after their face to face confrontation Mrs. Atherton reasoned in a letter to Bierce that character is of great importance in fiction, and "character requires the novel;" and that "whatever gives a true picture of the best of one's own times, a living piece of current history done from first hand impressions, is of permanent value." But at Sunol, in Bierce's bedroom, in the heat of argument, she blurted that Bierce only opposed the novel because he was incapable of writing one. "All short-story writers are jealous of novelists. They all try to write novels and few of them succeed. Any clever, cultivated mind, with a modicum of talent can manage a short story. But it takes a very special endowment and abundant imagination to sustain the creative faculty throughout a story of novel length."

Perhaps she felt she had gone too far with this assault, or the vigorous repartee had tired her out. Mrs. Atherton decided to change her tactics, soften her tone, and find a way to depart congenially, as a friend, on the six o'clock train. She apologized for being so quarrelsome and confessed to Bierce her great admiration for him; indeed, in her eyes he was a great man.

This failed to produce the desired effect. Mrs. Atherton never failed to be buoyed by any word of praise, but Bierce had the opposite response. He was furious. His failure to gain national recognition or to produce a large body of work gnawed at him. He could not take mere journalism for high art. "He was not great. He would not be called great. He was a failure, a mere hack. He got so red I feared he would have an attack of asthma."

There was nothing left for her to do but gingerly announce the late hour. It was time for her to go.

His manner warmed as they walked to the station. "He became almost charming. He thanked me for coming to see him and apologized for being so cantankerous, said that I was a blue and gold edition of all the poets. The train was late. We walked about the station and the malodorous grunting pigsty when he suddenly seized me in his arms and tried to kiss me. In a flash I knew how to hurt him . . . I threw back my head . . . and laughed gayly. 'The great Bierce! Master of style! The god on Olympus at whose feet pilgrims come to worship—trying to kiss a woman by a pig-styl!'"

The train arrived and he almost pushed her on board, shouting, "I never want to see you again! You are the most detestable vixen I ever met in my life, and I've had a horrible day."<sup>10</sup>

There was hesitation on both sides about meeting again, but they found they wanted to remain in touch and corresponded avidly. When his health faltered, she expressed sympathy. "I discover that I have an

*"I never want to see you again!  
You are the most detestable vixen  
I ever met in my life. . . ."*

eighth of an inch of heart . . . and it all goes out to you at the moment," she wrote. "Really I am concerned about you. A little selfishly, because you are quite the most interesting man in California and should be carefully pickled for the benefit of those who want to meet you more than once, but with a decent pinch of abstract sympathy also."

She reproached him for not coming to see her in San Francisco. "I have a charming apartment," she reported. "And a new tea-gown! Primrose yellow—most stunning—but tea-gowns are beneath your notice." She wanted to know when she was going to be asked to visit Sunol again. When he did ask she said she would come "when you want me very badly, not before." And she announced that she would not come alone a second time. She needed another woman along. "I haven't much regard for the conventions, but I have some," she said in one letter; and in another: "If I ever summon up my courage to go to Sunol again I think I will take a bodyguard." When he suggested she bring a mutual friend, Elodie Hogan, she balked. Elodie, who was in love with and eventually married Hilaire Belloc, was young and pretty enough to be a threat. "I am jealous of Elodie and will not take her to Sunol."

Evidently his letters gave her reason to fret about her standing in his eyes. She urged him to make his own judgments and not be swayed by what he heard or read about her. "Every once in a while you let fall something which makes me very uncomfortable, not to say mad. If I had met you three years ago, before

*Again in a right profile, Gertrude Atherton is seen in a photograph about ten years after meeting Ambrose Bierce.*

the public began to concern itself with me we would have got along much better. I would rather you knew the worst I could tell you about myself, than that you should believe the extraordinary estimates of my character that have been made by sensational or spiteful people. You have too deep a knowledge of human nature not to make up your mind for yourself . . . As it is I always feel at a disadvantage with you, and am half afraid to be natural lest everything I say be misinterpreted."

Bierce became her confidant. She sent him long, confessional letters, revealing a vulnerability and self-doubt that she was usually at pains to conceal. She acknowledged "terrible wants" in her nature, an inability to feel which she feared marked her as inhuman. "My imagination carries me everywhere, but my personality is unfinished. I am little more than an embodied imagination, a highly strung nervous system without a heart, a tablet with inherited repressions on one side, and a sort of magnet-wax on the other. N.B. There is nothing in my nature which is in sympathy with pig-styes."

Her letters keep returning to her wish to become "impersonal." "Do we ever outgrow ourselves?" she wonders. "If one could only be mind and sense, with neither heart nor soul!" But it was neither heart nor soul that got in the way of her friendship with Bierce. It was body.

Mrs. Atherton called herself "fastidious." Anything unclean or carnal, anything redolent of the animal in human conduct, upset and disgusted her. Despite her aversion to the "bloodlessness" and lack of passion in American literature of the New England tradition, despite her devotion to torrid literary romanticism and her preference for lowcut gowns, she was captive to a rigid and highly conventional sexual morality. As for Bierce, for all his seductive posturing he was the reverse of a free spirit, haunted and repressed. "He was proud to boast that no



woman, even his wife, had ever seen him in the buff."<sup>11</sup> An absolutist, he perceived the world in dualities. There were angels or devils, nothing in between.

Whenever they met there was trouble. She threatened to drop him entirely. "I shall never go to see you again. You give me the blues. I cannot say why but you do. Although I never by any chance agree with you, I have that regrettable thing called temperament which is sensitive to the influence of strong personalities. Moreover, although I like you tremendously on paper—in correspondence and in the abstract—I do not like you at all when I am with you."

Bierce was enough taken with her to carry her photograph with him, for a time, and show it around to his friends. Dr. Adolphe Danziger, who collaborated with Bierce and then fought with him over the rights and profits from *The Monk and the Hangman's Daughter*, was shown a picture of a woman "large-eyed, oval-faced, with a wealth of braided hair laid in a ring on a head that was gracefully posed on a strong symmetrical neck." The



image moved the German-speaking dentist to write a poem, "Die Nixe" ("The Mermaid") in the rhythm of Heine's "Lorelei," dedicated to "Mrs. Atherton, the authoress, after seeing her picture."<sup>12</sup> Such tributes delighted Mrs. A.

Insults did not, and Bierce was past master of them. However much she aspired to be "impersonal," Mrs. Atherton was easily hurt. "I pass over your insulting insinuations regarding my personal appearance. I have two men in love with me and they smooth down the feathers that you ruffle." She confessed, "I am frightfully susceptible to the opinion of others, especially if it is censorious. I have almost no confidence in myself, and do not know my good work from my bad. I only write at all because it is my strongest impulse, in fact the only . . . companion that I have." Injured by something he said that she considered "mean," she told him, "if you are inhuman the rest of us are not."

She had rejected Bierce's advances, but she was unwilling to renounce her sexual power over him. When his health failed she said she would "hold your hand were I there—which joy you must forget until some future attack." She teased him with references to the two men in her life, but made a secret of their identities: "No, you don't get their names. I will add, however, that I am the least bit in love with each of them, just about as much as I am with you (on paper.)" A few years later, when she had returned to New York and there was a safe distance between them, she cooed, "If there were flying machines I'd run over frequently and spend a week with you." She would gloss over their history of quarreling and write him that one of her friends "thinks I should go back & live with you—particularly on your mountain—thinks it would be so romantic." Or promise, "some time I'll go back to California just to spend a week with you—if you'll swear not to make love to me."

Distance was the key; it was her requisite for intimacy. She lived to a large extent in her own thoughts and imagination, where flesh did not interfere. A letter written in private and solitude, where she had total control, freed her to be both affectionate and introspective. Bierce could be relentlessly truthful, and he elicited from her one extraordinary letter. In it she drops her guard and confronts the contradictions in her nature, the conflict between her impulse to act the *femme fatale* and her coldness, detachment and Victorian moral scruples. "What do you mean," this letter begins, "by asking if I do not observe the observances?" She continues:

What observances? I do not pick pockets, nor do I betray [a friend], nor do I lie except when it is absolutely necessary. If I were addicted to lovers I should take a scientific delight in being false to them all. Nature designed me for an Aspasia and then unkindly planted me in a Puritan Conventional household and allotted me an unnecessary share of refinement and fastidiousness. The consequence is that after hammering away at the question for some years I came to the conclusion that the only thing for me to do was to sit outside life and look on; to live with my mind and put my personality in a hermetically sealed cell. When I take my pen in hand I understand character well enough; when I lay it down and attempt to formulate some sort of life for myself I am as much at sea as when I was seventeen. I have not the faintest idea of what is right or wrong. Morality to me is correlative with mystery.

I have known so many men, more than most women of my age, I think, and of all sorts, ages, and conditions. So you see it is better for other people to let me alone . . . to accept me as a mentality. As it is, my intrigues are all mental. There is such a thing . . . as intellectual passion; and that does not drag my warped and unfinished personality out of its cell. All this is very shocking, is it not? But I write it to you alone, so perhaps you will forgive me. I never said as much to anyone before.

This outburst came during one of Mrs. Atherton's periodic sieges of disillusion and world-weariness. In

"Do you mean any one in particular—me,  
for instance?"

GERTRUDE ATHERTON

"You are not particular, Mrs. Atherton."

AMBROSE BIERCE

San Francisco she had been throwing herself into the kind of socially active, engaged life that she never seemed able to sustain.

She had become one of Bierce's colleagues on the *Examiner* and was writing a weekly column. She claimed she disliked being a newspaper woman, but was seeing a lot of the *Examiner* crowd, especially of the editor Sam Chamberlain—eloquent, debonair, and alcoholic—who had been present at Sunol for part of her introductory visit to Bierce. She often invited Chamberlain and cronies Ned Hamilton and "Cosey" Noble to breakfast at her San Francisco apartment. Bierce and Dr. Danziger attended one such entertainment, presided over by Mrs. Atherton in a lacy, diaphanous gown, daintily holding a cigarette "between her smiling lips." The conversation touched on Bierce's recent attack, in "Prattle," on women writers. "With rare exceptions," he had written, "women who write are destitute, not only of common sense, but of the sense of right and wrong—they are moral idiots . . . Never have I known a female antagonist who did not lie and cheat with as little concern . . . as a pig with a mouthful of young larks." What's more, "women of uncommon mental power are, as a rule, noticeably masculine in figure, face, voice, manner or habit."<sup>13</sup> Mrs. Atherton challenged Bierce to name his target. "Do you mean any one in particular—me, for instance?" Bierce replied, "You are not particular, Mrs. Atherton."<sup>14</sup>

When Bierce repeated the charge, in letters, that

she had something masculine in her nature, she defended herself by saying that what he called masculine was only self-reliance and strength, "an amount of independence" which circumstances had forced her to develop. He must have commented on her many detailed descriptions of beautiful women, hinting that she was attracted to women. To that she answered that her descriptions were merely verbal portraits, and that she wouldn't care if she never saw another woman.

During her months at the *Examiner* she maintained a feverish social pace: morning breakfasts, afternoon picnics, evenings at the opera, and the constant attendance of Sam Chamberlain. She complained that she wasn't getting any work done and could think of nothing but amusing herself "in the most frivolous manner." She invited Bierce to join her and some friends on a camping excursion: "Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Noble, Mr. Stokes, Miss Beveridge, Elodie Hogan and myself are going into the redwood mountains twenty miles behind Menlo for five days. Frank Atherton has a home there in the wilderness and we fish & tramp all day—also we girls wear boy's clothes. I wish you could come. I think you would suit the redwoods." Bierce declined, but he wanted to hear more about the costumes he was going to miss. Mrs. Atherton explained, "Of course we are not going to wear real boy's clothes. We wear short trousers, long loose leggings & a tunic to our knees. To this fascinating costume I shall add a pink sunbonnet."

Always in rebellion, Mrs. Atherton found herself tiring of the social merry-go-round. She told Bierce, "I have been making a frantic effort to interest myself in people . . . but I regret to say it is a dead failure. What a frightful bore the nine hundred and ninety-nine are." She was depressed. "Just now I am rather disgusted with life in general. If I could have smallpox I think I might do some good literary work."

Undoubtedly Chamberlain's drinking contributed to her black mood. Drunkenness was particularly distasteful to her; it had broken up her parents' marriage. She begged Chamberlain to stop and he refused. Then she gave him walking papers, and said she never wanted to see him again. She told Bierce her only remaining interest in him was as material for fiction, and made him the model for Trennahan in *The Californians*.

If parting with Chamberlain was one motive behind her decision to flee San Francisco and "bury" herself in the country, the failure of her *Examiner* column was another. As columnist she attempted the role of a bitter, cruel and blasphemous female Bierce. But she lacked his verbal polish and moral authority. She lashed out in all directions, doing her best to outrage and offend everybody.

A column called "Woman in Her Variety" was aimed at female readers, but it attacked women at least as often as it championed them, calling them "more barbarous" than men because discriminatory laws had fostered irresponsibility and childishness in them. It praised such a woman as Clara Barton for her "aspirations above the commonplace," but heaped scorn on ordinary women, on the inanities of the *Ladies Home Journal* and the tedium of domestic life. Marriage was declared unnatural if it lasted too long, and incompatibility—not adultery—the greatest marital evil. Divorce was certainly more honorable than a loveless union, and if divorce couldn't remove an unwanted husband, there was always murder. Several methods were recommended: serving the victim wine with plenty of glass in it, pouring boiling lead into his ear as he slept, or stabbing his ear-drum with a knitting needle.

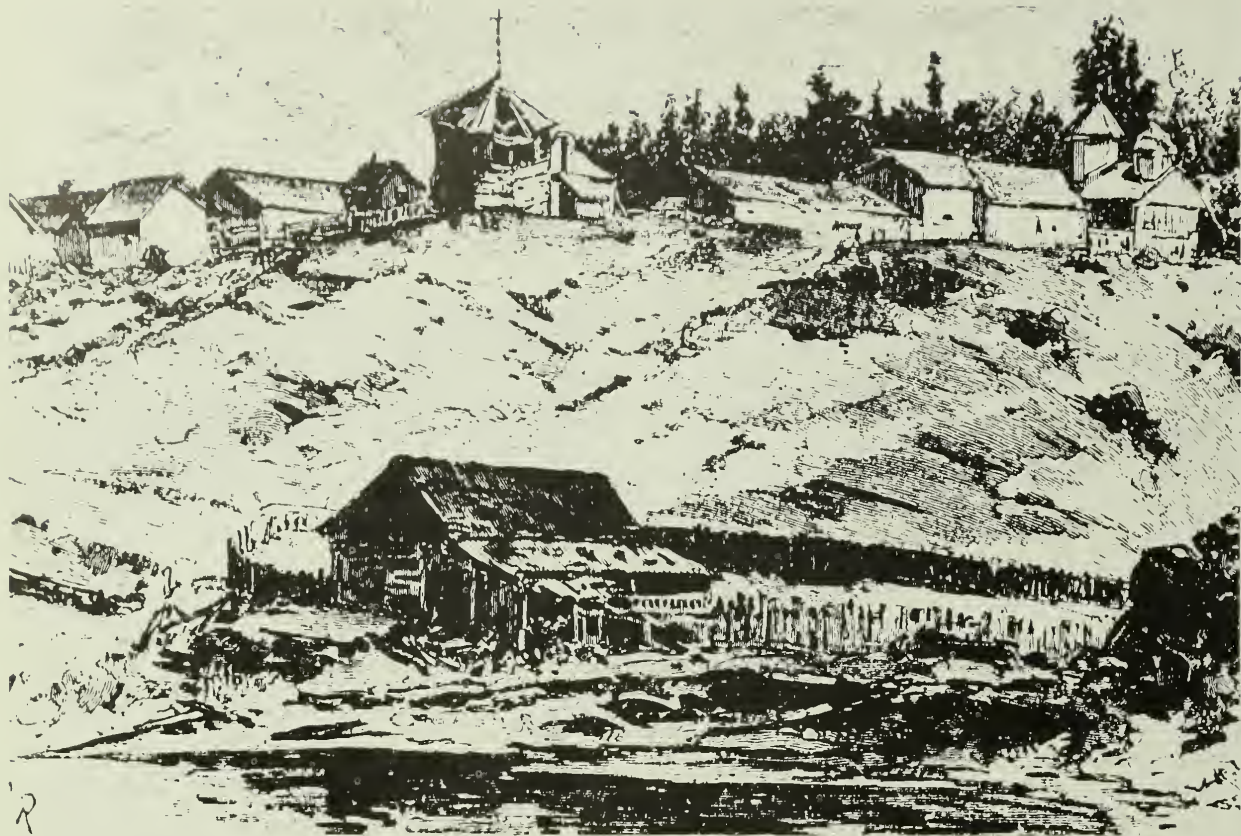
Again in a murderous mood, she used her column to castigate the downtrodden and their helpmates. "May the devil fly away with charity," she wrote.

"People incapable of taking care of themselves . . . should out of pure Christian charity have their heads stuck in a barrel of chloroform. I hate all people who are interested in charities, particularly society girls."<sup>15</sup>

Such remarks did not endear her to the public. Readers were objecting. "I am in hot water," she kept telling Bierce. "Hearst seems to be worried at the fuss some women are making." As a regular feature, "Women in her Variety" met with a swift end, and William Randolph Hearst himself drove the final nail in its coffin. Always ready with a new scheme for arousing the "gee-whiz" emotion in his readers, he had increased *Examiner* circulation ten-fold with his stunts and sensations, moving baseball news to the front page and printing popular songs on Sundays.<sup>16</sup> Now he came up with a bright idea for the Women's section: something lively and amusing would result from combining Gertrude Atherton's acid with the sugar-water of the maudlin poet and advice-giver, Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Mrs. Atherton was appalled. She wrote Bierce, "Hearst has purchased some letters of Ella Wheeler Wilcox on the supposition that I would fight her and boom his paper nicely. Imagine it!" She suspended her column—resuming work for Hearst again in later years—and left San Francisco.

Her refuge was the Russian-built northern California town of Fort Ross. Here she would drop from the society she had been keeping and throw herself into serious writing. Just as, after the *Hermia* furor she sought respectability with *Los Cerritos*, now she turned to fiction with a California background and a tragic plot to prove she was more than a journalistic viper. The book she was working on was *The Doomsdwoman*, whose heroine, Chonita Iturbi y Moncada possesses intellect and dignity as well as beauty. Blonde like Mrs. Atherton, Chonita personifies California: "magnificent, audacious, incomprehensible, a creature of storms and convul-





sions and impregnable calm; the germ of all good and bad in her.”<sup>17</sup> She is Mrs. Atherton’s idealized self.

“I am working like steam,” she reported to Bierce, “and I have come to the conclusion that it is the only thing that suits me. I do not get along in the world at all, but I am always content when I am off by myself in the country and hard at work.” She had chosen Fort Ross, she explained, because the latter part of her book was set there. “It is a beautiful place and very solitary, only the hotel and usual accessory of ‘store’ and post-telegraph-express office—also a saloon, of course—and a cottage or two in the distance. The cliffs are very fine, and the hills, covered more or less with redwoods, slope almost to the river. I walk four miles a day & don’t even get tired. Am learning to shoot with a rifle.”

The Fort Ross cure seemed to work beautifully. She cultivated her dark mood, and drank in the dramatic scenery, “with the sea thundering at the base of the cliffs, and the winter wind howling in the redwood forests.” From her isolated perch she

mailed off manuscripts, wrote to editors, and devoted herself to serious study.

Her instructor was none other than Ambrose Bierce. During one of her contrite phases Mrs. Atherton fell willingly into the role of the dutiful student seeking her teacher’s approval. Grandfather Stephen Franklin had always served as intellectual guide and moral exemplar. With his death came guilt: she had never done anything during his lifetime to justify his investment in her. She internalized his voice, trying to meet his standard. And in Bierce she found the perfect new taskmaster, the man who had set himself up as literary standard-bearer and policeman to the entire Pacific coast. She added her name to his list of “pupils,” studying his suggested texts: Landor’s *Imaginary Conversations*, Professor John Nichol’s *English Composition*, and Longinus on “The Sublime.” She sent him samples of her work for comment, saying “I would rather have your opinion than that of all the critics of America put together.”

*It was at the Russian-built northern California town of Fort Ross that Gertrude Atherton chose to drop from society for a time and devote herself to serious writing.*

He proposed to help her perfect her prose style, with an eye to increased "precision of thought and expression, condensation and individuality of expression." With his help she was determined to make up for her youthful lack of discipline. "You are quite right," she wrote him, "about early lack of guidance. I do not suppose any writer ever started so wholly wrong. This was partly from having brought myself up from infancy, riding over everybody, and finishing up with [her husband] Mr. Atherton . . . It is only in the last year that I have learned to write, and it is to you and Mr. Chamberlain that I owe whatever the results may be."

In addressing Bierce she could assume an abject and submissive tone that was reserved for him alone: "You are too good to me anyway. I appreciate more deeply than you know your interest in me; but I am equally aware that men prefer being amused by women to instructing them." Like a child to an adored parent—or grandparent—she said, "some day I hope you will be proud of me."

Writing from one outpost of civilization to Bierce in another, she became a companion in alienation. (Bierce was almost as restless as she, drifting from Sunol to Howell Mountain to Los Gatos to Wright's in the Santa Cruz Mountains in search of a "breathing place."<sup>18</sup>) Here were two elitists sharing a distrust of democracy and a disdain for the common herd. "Commonplace," for both was the ultimate slur and the fiction of William Dean Howells its contemptible repository. Both had spent time in England and sympathized with British literary tradition and class distinctions. Recoiling from everyday life in nineteenth century America, they yearned for what was remote, strange or special. When Mrs. Atherton put Bierce into a story, she made him a hermit who, like the Duke in *As You Like It*, has withdrawn to a simple, natural life in the wilderness, far from accursed society. She made the heroine (another

stand-in for herself) appear at the woodsy retreat, disguised as a boy. The hermit is the only one who can penetrate her disguise.

Because they were literary allies as well (at least at a distance) as friends, Bierce and Atherton made a practice of boosting each other's work. When *Cosmopolitan* asked Mrs. Atherton for an article on "The Literary Development of California," she named many writers, but reserved her highest praise for her sometime antagonist: "Ambrose Bierce sits alone on the top of the mountain and does work which twenty years ago would have given instant fame, and yet he is known and published only locally, in San Francisco." She judged him, as a short story writer, greater than Edgar Allen Poe.<sup>19</sup>

Bierce had no objection to the favorable comparison with Poe, but he did not like being labelled a California writer. He had little respect for the species, and had declined an invitation from editor Joseph Stoddart to have work of his included in a "Californian" issue of *Lippincott's*, where *The Doomswoman* would appear. Born in Ohio, raised in Indiana, he had fought and lived in the South during the Civil War. His residency in San Francisco had been interrupted by stays in London and the Black Hills, Dakota Territory, and he professed no love or special loyalty to the state or city that worshipped him. Quite the reverse. He called San Francisco a Gomorrah, a "moral penal colony." Mrs. Atherton remonstrated with him, pleading that as the "star writer of the state" he should not turn down Stoddart's invitation, "however much you may resent the imputation of being called a Californian." Bierce remained unmoved.

From the extreme of rejecting all California writers Bierce swung to rhapsodic celebration of *The Doomswoman*. "In its class" the book was "superior to any that any Californian had done." It was "luminous and full of color. Full of movement . . .



*The September 1892 issue of Lippincott's contained The Doomswoman. A California story with a tragic plot, the novel was praised by Bierce who called it "the most notable book in our California literature."*

too and with something sounding through it that, if not exactly the 'surge and thunder' of genius [was], nevertheless, a long remove from the drone of the mere 'artist.' " Mrs. Atherton alone knew how to write English as spoken by Spanish Californians and to reproduce early California life "before the gold-greedy and dirty-shirted Americans came to vulgarize the situation." Bierce found it pleasing to be praising *The Doomswoman* in the *Examiner*, the very place "where Mrs. Atherton's indubitable indiscretions have incurred the red-handed welcome of a giant in a cave, hospitably hungry." The book signalled her progress "through the errors of youth, inexperience and a certain besetting perversity." Not only was it "sweet and wholesome in point of morality," it was quite simply "the most notable book in our California literature."<sup>20</sup>

Mrs. Atherton was no longer at Fort Ross when she read these hymns of praise. After a few months she had tired of it and told Bierce she was leaving. She had no particular plan, but would "drift out and land somewhere else." She lingered in San Francisco briefly, made arrangements for her daughter Muriel to be enrolled in a convent school in New York in the coming fall, and arrived in the east in time to witness the tumult created by the death of poet Walt Whitman. It was March, 1892 and her return to California had lasted just short of two years.

From New York she wrote Bierce often, full of gratitude for what he had done for her: "You have not only taught me to write, but you have extracted the sting from mine enemies. Nobody will listen to them now." Once she addressed him as "Captain, Oh my Captain!" She sought to repay her debt to him in a number of ways, supplying a fund of anecdotes he might use in "Prattle," suggesting the title "Shapes of Clay" (which comes from the *Rubaiyat*) for his volume of poetry, and using the access she now had to many editors and publishers to

help Bierce get nationally published and reviewed. "*Publish in the East*," she urged; "then you get circulation on both sides of the continent. Publish in the West and you don't get east of Pittsburgh."

Bierce was incapable of heeding advice she gave about cultivating the favor of the literary establishment. He had nothing but contempt for those who played such games. A prime reason for his gradual drifting out of friendship with Mrs. Atherton was undoubtedly his feeling that she played them all too well. The charge he made in his first letter to her—that she sought publicity and followed fads—was never withdrawn. She unconsciously verified the accusation when she wrote occasional bragging letters about how good she was getting at spreading her fame. She courted success of the sort that is measured in book sales and celebrity, and was quite willing to make the compromises necessary to attain it. Bierce was after something more elusive, enduring. Although he wanted a reputation as a serious writer, he could not see writing to please a wide audience for whom you have secret contempt.

Nor could Bierce, champion of brevity as the soul of wit, forgive Mrs. Atherton's tendency to run on, in novels or letters. He commented on her vast output, complained about the length of her letters (written in handwriting so illegible he said he broke into a sweat at the sight of one), and threatened not to read them.

He did read—with little pleasure—her novel published in *Godey's* in which he appears thinly disguised as Mr. Arbuthnot, a man of intellect who has withdrawn to a mountain-top in disgust at humankind. He goes on living only because solitude, books and women still please him; "when they cease to have any relation to myself I shall put a bullet in my skull." Cynical and receptive to the irrational, Arbuthnot is a foil to the *enfant terrible* heroine Heloise. Spoiled, impatient, willful, adventurous and



CALIFORNIAN NUMBER.

Portrait of **GERTRUDE ATHERTON.**

THIS NUMBER CONTAINS

# THE DOOMSWOMAN

By **GERTRUDE ATHERTON,**

Author of "What Dreams May Come," "Hermia Suydam," "Los Cerritos," "Mrs. Pendleton's Four-in-Hand," Etc., Etc.

COMPLETE.



MONTHLY MAGAZINE

## CONTENTS

<b>THE DOOMSWOMAN. (Illustrated)</b>	<i>Gertrude Atherton</i>	261-365
CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM. (Portrait)	<i>M. H. de Young</i>	366
THE SISTERS. (Poem)	<i>Nelly Booth Simmons</i>	371
A FAMOUS PEBBLE BEACH. (Illustrated)	<i>Helen F. Lowe</i>	372
TO THE COLORADO DESERT. (Poem)	<i>Madge Morris</i>	377
THE HAND OF TIME. (Illustrated)	<i>Emma B. Kaufman</i>	378
LITANY OF THE SHRINES. (Poem)	<i>Charles Warren Stoddard</i>	390
CALIFORNIA ERAS. (Portrait)	<i>Hubert H. Bancroft</i>	391
BOOTH IN HAMLET. (Poem, Illustrated)	<i>Flora Macdonald Shearer</i>	398
THE PRINCESS OF RATTLESNAKES. (Illustrated)	<i>Heine Miller</i>	399
CALIFORNIA POPPIES. (Poem)	<i>Martha T. Tyler</i>	405
IN THE GRAND CAÑON. (Poem, Illustrated)	<i>Ina H. Coolbrith</i>	406
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF CALIFORNIA	<i>W. C. Morrow</i>	407
MRS. ATHERTON'S NOVELS. (A Dialogue)	<i>William S. Walsh</i>	412
AS IT SEEMS		416
WITH THE WITS. (Illustrated by leading artists.)		

PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

PUBLISHED BY

**J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO. PHILADELPHIA:**

LONDON: WARD, LOCK, BOWDEN & CO.

PARIS: BRENTANO'S, 17 AVENUE DE L'OPERA.

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quintessentially Californian, she shoots at bears, breaks men's hearts, and freely expresses her often insulting opinions. Arbuthnot tells her she is merely a brilliant child. He might be willing to fall in love with her after the world has ripened her another ten years.<sup>21</sup> To anyone interested in Mrs. Atherton and Mr. Bierce it is a fascinating picture, but Bierce was not amused. He asked her to let "A Christmas Witch" go no further. Although Mrs. Atherton usually republished her magazine fiction in book form, and this was a full-length novel, she honored his wish.

After her move to England in 1895 and his subsequent relocation in Washington D.C. the stream of Atherton-Bierce letters dwindles to a trickle. They continued to send one another copies of their new books, and he sometimes gave one of hers favorable mention in his column; she reported on mutual friends (such as Elodie Hogan Belloc) when she saw them, sent postcards from Germany of the scenes for *The Monk and the Hangman's Daughter*, and supplied two favorites, Horace Annesley Vachell and Richard Le Gallienne, with letters of introduction to Bierce when they visited Washington. But for six years prior to Bierce's mysterious disappearance in Mexico in 1914 not a word passed between them.

Sooner or later the implacable Bierce came to a falling out with most of his friends and "pupils," and it was inevitable that he should disapprove of the direction Mrs. Atherton took as a popular, prolific novelist. But, according to his daughter Helen, he did retain respect for her intelligence. "He used to marvel at the lucidity of her thinking," and counted her among the three women—the others were Empress Eugénie and George Eliot—whose intellect he admired.<sup>22</sup>

As for Mrs. Atherton, she clung to her memory of Bierce, her pride in their connection, and her esteem for his writing, always including him, along with

Bret Harte, Mark Twain and Henry James, in her private literary pantheon. She loved to repeat the story of the pig-sty kiss, carefully omitting any mention of her own trap-setting. Bierce became one of her icons. Among her last words to him, addressed from Munich, were these: "Your picture hangs in my salon."

They were afraid of each other, these two contenders. He was afraid she would prove smarter than he was, and stronger. She was afraid by turns of his censure and his too ardent pursuit. Both wanted power and control. Their views of one another and of the opposite sex are so defended, so heavy with contradiction, they pauperize the word "ambivalent." They wove nets of inconsistency, these two misanthropes in search of company, attracting and repelling, praising and reviling: a man who loved but hated women, whose confused standard of propriety allowed him to censure the morals of a book and then try to seduce its author; a woman who sheathed her Puritan heart in siren's garb and who became most intimate when she was furthest away. The wonder is, they liked each other so much.

The letter on page 337 is from the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. The portrait of Gertrude Atherton on page 340 is courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library. All others are from the CHS Library.

## Notes

1. *New York Times*, March 10, 1889; *New York World*, February 17, 1889.
2. *San Francisco Argonaut*, January 21, 1889.
3. Gertrude Atherton, unpublished Letter to Ambrose Bierce, March 4, (1889), Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California. All Atherton letters in the article are at the Bancroft and are quoted with its permission and

that of Florence Atherton Dickey. Precise dating of the letters is not possible, since Mrs. Atherton made a practice of leaving out the year, and sometimes the month, in her letter headings.

4. George Sterling, "The Shadow Maker," *American Mercury*, VI (October, 1925), p. 12.
5. Ambrose Bierce, Letter to Ella Sterling Cummins, May 1, 1892, California Historical Society Library, San Francisco. Quoted by permission.
6. "Prattle," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 23, 1890. Bierce's comments on women are conveniently brought together by Lois Rather in her *Bittersweet: Ambrose Bierce and Women* (Oakland, California, 1975).
7. Gertrude Atherton, "A Christmas Witch," *Godey's Magazine*, CXXVI (January, 1893), p. 76.
8. Richard O'Conner, *Ambrose Bierce: A Biography* (Boston, 1967), p. 157; and W. A. Swanberg, *Citizen Hearst* (New York, 1961), p. 53.
9. *Collected Works of Ambrose Bierce*, VII (New York and Washington, 1911), p. 231.
10. Gertrude Atherton, *Adventures of a Novelist* (New York, 1932), pp. 202-205.
11. Sterling, "Shadow Maker," p. 12.
12. Adolphe De Castro (Danziger), *Portrait of Ambrose Bierce* (New York, 1929), p. 162.
13. "Prattle," October 4, 1891.
14. De Castro, *Ambrose Bierce*, p. 164.
15. "Woman in her Variety" appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* between August and October, 1891.
16. Swanberg, *Citizen Hearst*, pp. 42-59.
17. *The Doomswoman* (New York, 1893), p. 21.
18. Carey McWilliams, *Ambrose Bierce: A Biography* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1967), p. 164.
19. Gertrude Atherton, "The Literary Development of California," *Cosmopolitan*, January, 1891, pp. 269-78.
20. "Prattle," September 18, 1892 and June 18, 1893.
21. Atherton, "Christmas Witch," p. 76.
22. Helen Bierce, "Ambrose Bierce at Home," *American Mercury*, XXX (December, 1933), p. 455.



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## The Italians of San Francisco in 1865:

G. B. Cerruti's Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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*North Beach in 1865 was home for most of San Francisco's Italian community. The open area is Washington Square Park. In the distance is Telegraph Hill.*

*The diplomatic report which follows has had an interesting transatlantic history in its own right—in manuscript, in photocopy, and now, for the first time, in print.<sup>1</sup>*

It was written by Giovanni Battista Cerruti, the first regular Italian consul in San Francisco, on March 3, 1865, and sent to his superiors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turin. Turin, in the northwestern region of Piedmont, had been the capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia, and for the first four years of unified Italy capital of the entire peninsula. But for Cerruti to address a report to this city in March of 1865, when the seat of government had been officially transferred to Florence in September of the previous year, could not but provide a source of puzzlement for future scholars. This perplexity is compounded by the fact that the original document is presently preserved in the Archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome. Thanks to information generously provided by Professor Francesca Loverci of the University of Rome, it is now possible to trace the document's itinerary from the north to the center of Italy, and to explain the problematical destination of Cerruti's correspondence. Although the so-called September Convention of 1864 shifted the Italian capital to Florence, the Foreign Ministry was not relocated there until May of the following year, two months after the consul had written his report. The Kingdom of Italy then annexed Rome in September, 1870, and in 1871 the center of government was definitively established in the Eternal City. All diplomatic correspondence from San Francisco to the Italian Foreign Ministry in its various capitals has now been transferred to Rome and can be consulted there.

Compared to the tortuous path followed by Cerruti's report from his San Francisco office at 907 Jackson Street, through Turin and to Rome, its trip back home to San Francisco is rather uncomplicated. The document was found and photocopied by the Italian-born Professor Dino Cinel, now of Tulane University, during the course of research for his recently completed doctoral thesis at Stanford.<sup>2</sup> Professor Cinel kindly brought it to the attention of Mr. Alessandro Baccari, founder and director of the North Beach Museum,

because of its significance for the early history of the Italian colony in the City.<sup>3</sup> Along with Olga Richardson and Andrew Canepa, both connected in various capacities with the Museum, Mr. Baccari thought to make this important source available to the wider historical community.

Now translated and printed for the first time, this much-traveled consular report is thus the occasion of a fruitful international scholarly collaboration, as well as the first published result of the efforts of the North Beach Museum to illustrate the multicultural heritage of San Francisco.<sup>4</sup>

Giovanni Battista Cerruti was born in Genoa, in the region of Liguria, in 1823 and entered government service in his native city as a volunteer worker in the post office in 1847. During the general European upheaval of 1848-49, the young Cerruti fought against Austria as an officer in the Sardinian army. Between the time he entered the diplomatic corps in 1850 and his appointment to San Francisco in October, 1863, Cerruti was as itinerant as his report, serving in a series of posts and missions in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay. He arrived in California in 1864, replacing the then acting consul, Swiss-born Emanuel Berri. It was Cerruti's own first full consular position; and it was also the first time that a regular Italian consul had been assigned to San Francisco, to serve a community which numbered about 1,000 in the city and 6,000 in the rest of the state. Upon his departure in 1874, the post was filled by Count Diego Barrilis.<sup>5</sup>

Because of the paucity of local Italian papers which have survived from the period, we know very little

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of G.B. Cerruti's activities during his ten-year sojourn in San Francisco. From his diplomatic correspondence, Cerruti emerges as a competent and responsible civil servant with a penchant for thoroughness, and as a compassionate man who often went beyond formal duty to aid his compatriots in distress. His consular report of 1865 clearly reveals that the early Italian nucleus in California was not as economically self-sufficient nor as stable as is commonly assumed. The false allure of overnight wealth in the gold mines led to broken dreams and at times broken health, and to a considerable number of indigent, sick and transient Italians, many of whom eventually found their way onto San Francisco's streets. Cerruti relates the sad stories of some of these persons (including the pathetic case of Davide Cochi, blind, broke and abandoned by his friends), and recounts what he was able to do for them on a personal, humanitarian level. These were unselfish acts of kindness which redeem him, one might say, from his other role as *longa manus* of the Royal Italian Army and its conscription service on the Pacific Coast. On an institutional level, Cerruti was involved in the administration of the Italian Mutual Benefit Society, as president in 1865 and then as its secretary in the following two years. From another source, we also learn that in 1870-71, the Italian consul was vice-president of the local French Savings and Loan Society.<sup>6</sup>

Both of these affiliations are links to a much-neglected figure of the early history of San Francisco, Nicola (Nicholas) Larco, whose name appears at several intervals in the consular report. A *paesano* of Cerruti, Larco was also born in the province of Genoa, at Santa Margherita Ligure, in 1818. He had come to San Francisco in 1849 from Lima, Peru, where he had already amassed considerable means; and here he soon established himself as an import-export commission dealer in groceries, provisions and coffee on

Jackson Street between Sansome and Montgomery, where we find him from 1850 to 1876. In addition, he owned a fleet of commercial vessels regularly operating between Mexico and San Francisco.<sup>7</sup> There is no doubt that during his heyday in the 1850s and 1860s Larco was the leading Italian merchant of the Pacific Coast, and indeed a reliable source claims that he headed the largest import-export house in the City.<sup>8</sup> This was at a time when the Ligurians, who it is said accounted for ninety percent of the state's Italian population,<sup>9</sup> dominated the San Francisco fishing industry as well as truck farming and the produce market, and the leading commission merchants of the Italian community were Genoese. Against this backdrop emerged Nicholas Larco, "l'astro maggiore della nostra colonia," as he was defined by an anonymous biographer.<sup>10</sup>

To his credit, Larco was one of the few Italian businessmen to assume an active role of leadership in the young and disorganized community. In this capacity, he was the chief promoter and first president of the *Società Italiana di Mutua Beneficenza* in 1858, an office he held intermittently into the 1860s. It is partially in this guise that Larco and Cerruti are linked in the pages of the latter's report of 1865. But their collaboration within the Society and without extended beyond humanitarianism and ethnic solidarity.

The Italian Mutual Benefit Society, which has survived to this day as the oldest continuing Italian institution in the United States, had an early history racked by financial difficulties, personal jealousies, regional rivalries, and not least of all the political conflict which divided the colony between monarchists and republicans. From 1862, under the presidency of Larco, one element of divisiveness was



eliminated when the Society restricted its membership solely to immigrants from the region of Liguria.<sup>11</sup> Political divisions, though, continued to beset the organization. Since it could be employed as an important source of patronage, the Society was a bone of contention between the Mazzinian faction, led by Angelo Mangini and Carlo Dondero, and those loyal to the ruling dynasty of Savoy. Among the latter were Federico Biesta, former acting consul of Sardinia, Augusto B. Splivalo and Raffaele Ancarani, co-owners of *La Parola*, G. B. Cerruti, as official representative of the Kingdom, and Nicola Larco.<sup>12</sup>

Larco's services to the monarchy were of long standing and importance, outside of the Society as well. In 1859, for example, he had financed Biesta's fledgling *L'Eco della Patria*.<sup>13</sup> It is thus no surprise that in 1865 the editorial offices of another royalist paper, *La Parola*, were housed in the same building as Larco's firm at 430 Jackson Street (incidentally, also the address of the Mutual Benefit Society).<sup>14</sup> The Italian consul for his part was in an excellent position to reward this loyal collaborator. Cerruti obtained for him a nomination as knight of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus. But more concrete and lucrative expressions of appreciation were also involved. As Larco was an importer and owned merchant ships of Italian registry, it is clear that Cerruti's suggestion to Turin to provide facilities for Italian navigation in California waters would have been of mutual benefit both to the commerce of the Kingdom and to the affairs of Nicholas Larco.

G. B. Cerruti's presence on the board of directors of the French Savings and Loan Society is a further tie between these two men, as well as an indication of the widespread cooperation between the Italian and French communities in early San Francisco. Nicholas Larco had been a founding officer of this

same *Société Française d'Épargnes et de Prévoyance Mutuelle* in 1860 and remained its vice-president through 1862. In fact, Larco was ubiquitous in the charitable and mutual aid institutions of the French colony, where he held various posts of responsibility: among these, member of the founding committee of the *Société de Rapatriement* (1856) for the repatriation of aged and infirm Frenchmen; member of the French Mutual Benefit Society and of its committee to determine the cost and financing of the projected French Hospital (1857); founding officer of the welfare agency which went under the name of *Société de Secours* (1859).

As would be supposed, however, Larco's association with the French community extended beyond philanthropy to joint business ventures. The two, of course, are not mutually exclusive, and indeed one could prove a source of contacts for the other. For example, through both avenues, Larco had occasion to collaborate with Gustave Mahé, simultaneously president of the Mutual Benefit Society and manager of the Savings and Loan Society. In the Buenaventura Mining Company, established in 1863, a venture with interests in gold and coal mines, the fifteen founding shareholders were preponderantly French and Italian. Among them we find Larco, as secretary, along with another Genoese who had come to California via Peru, the chocolate manufacturer Domenico Ghirardelli.<sup>15</sup> President of the company was Justinien Caire, again also involved with Larco as an officer of both the mutual aid society and the savings bank. Finally, Larco's French connection extended to politics. An instance of this is his participation in the celebrations of November 26, 1855, on the occasion of the taking of Sebastopol in the Crimean War, in which he and Ghirardelli were the official Sardinian representatives, alongside their French and English counterparts.<sup>16</sup>

Nicholas Larco's activities within and with the French colony are part of the wider context of Franco-Italian cooperation in early San Francisco, a symbiosis which ranged from journalism, to mutual aid and medical institutions, to business and politics. The first Italian newspapers in San Francisco, which appeared fleetingly in the mid-1850s, were actually one-page supplements to the Spanish colony's organ *La Crónica* and to *Le Phare*, a French semi-weekly. The French Savings and Loan Society in which Larco and Cerruti were involved also provided health insurance. Investment and membership in it were shared between the two communities to such a degree that the institution was officially known under both its French and Italian names<sup>17</sup> and published its proceedings in both languages. Cooperation with the French also characterized the early history of the Italians' own benevolent association. For example, from 1859 to 1861, the Italian Mutual Benefit Society sent its members to the French Hospital for major medical care, an arrangement resumed after the demise of the Society's own hospital in 1874. Moreover, the funds collected in 1865 to build this short-lived Italian Hospital had been deposited by Cerruti with the French Savings and Loan Society.

In the report of this consul, Franco-Italian political collaboration is also indicated, with reference to the protection mutually extended to each other's nationals by Italian and French consular agents in the Isthmus of Panama. In San Francisco, before Cerruti's arrival, the affairs of the Sardinian and later Italian government had been handled by the French consul, Patrice Guillaume Dillon, from 1853 to 1857, and then by Benjamin Davidson, as acting consul for the Kingdom in 1857-62. Though Davidson was an Englishman by birth, he was local representative of the French Rothschild bank and active in the City's French colony.

Davidson had been a founding officer, along with Nicholas Larco, of the French savings bank and protective association. This brings the story back to the central figure of San Francisco's Italian community in the first two decades of its history and to his key role in the Franco-Italian combination. The preceding paragraphs have but scratched the surface of the intricate network of business partnerships, joint benevolent activities, diplomatic and political collaboration, and (it may be assumed) friendships and social relations, which linked the two immigrant groups. At the center of this web stood Nicholas Larco. Chief businessman and community leader among his own compatriots, and the only Italian widely active in the French colony as well, Larco clearly emerges as the *trait d'union*, the hyphen, in the Italian-French connection of early San Francisco.

**B**elow the surface, however, there remains much to be explained. What were, for instance, the origins and function of this symbiosis? Dino Cinel has recently pointed out the central importance of French collaboration in providing leadership, institutional models and organizational skills to the amorphous and acephalous nascent Italian community. In short, Italian immigrants served their apprenticeship in community-building, from newspapers to mutual aid societies, at the workbench of the better-organized and more cohesive French colony. The significance of this observation in the broader context of immigration history is that in San Francisco, at least, the structures created by the early Italians were molded not by the impact of the American social environment, as is usually argued, but rather through interaction with another, better-established immigrant group.<sup>18</sup>

The question of the roots of the Franco-Italian



*Photograph of the Society of California Pioneers building located on Washington Street off Keamy, across from Portsmouth Square, taken in 1867 by San Francisco photographer Alfred Perkins. Nicholas Larco, prominent merchant and leader of the Italian colony, was secretary of the Society during that period.*



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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 15 Marzo 1863

### COSE D'ITALIA.

— Scrivono dal Veneto all'Opinione di Torino la seguente cronaca di non poco interesse:

I confusi politici non valsero giammai ad arrestare le idee. E le linee del Minicio e del Po non valgono a separare per vera guisa queste provincie dal cuore dell'Italia. I fatti che costì avvengono trovano fra noi un'eco che li ripete e un sentimento che li giudica non guari distanti da quello dove i fatti stessi si svolgono. Epperò gli avvenimenti di questi ultimi tempi commossero grandemente gli animi nostri, come se fossero accaduti in mezzo a noi.

I fattuosi fatti di Torino, l'annunzio risposta di tutta l'Italia, la demissione del ministro Minghetti-Peruzzi la formazione del ministero La Marmora, la convenzione franco-italiana del 15 settembre, le note diplomatiche fra il gabinetto italiano ed il francese, l'approvazione del trasferimento della capitale a Firenze, i provvedimenti finanziari proposti dal ministro Sella, la gara dei comuni italiani nell'offrire anticipato il pagamento dell'imposta fondiaria del 1865, lo splendido e confortevole risultato di tale nautica concorrenza, le

e il trasferimento della capitale non com'erano, ma come italiani. Essi prevedono tutto che un tale movimento avvenimento non poteva a meno di non rimuovere per qualche tempo l'attenzione e gli intendimenti del governo italiano dalla questione veneta. E si prevedono che il lungo e difficilissimo tramutamento dei dicasteri e di tutto l'amministrazione governativa, che si sta operando, non può che la bisogna tutte le preoccupazioni del governo italiano, e che quell'inverno alla quale avevamo disposto il compimento delle nostre speranze, in cambio di aspirarsi al favore delle ultime battaglie si sarebbe invece consumata in tramutamenti burocratici, e in riassetamenti amministrativi. La riduzione dell'esercito il contingente di pace ch'essi forse non avevano prevista senza a certa ora troppo evidentemente e troppo dolorosamente questi loro previsioni, e di tutte queste necessità politiche (a che giova dissimularlo?) fu certamente la più dura a sopportarsi e la più difficile a subire senza uno schianto ed uno sconcerto che niente ancora si è addegnato. Ma d'altra parte l'idea che la questione romana non possa sciogliersi senza che contemporaneamente o di conseguenza inorga la necessità di scioglimento della questione veneta, le considerazioni strategiche sulla più sicura posizione della nuova capitale per cimentarsi alle supreme battaglie, l'interesse reciproco, anzi la necessità vicendevole di questa integrazione nazionale, convenita o patteggiata (ma ad ogni modo ammessa) dagli stessi nostri nemici, la fedeltà dei nostri destini d'Italia e nel sentimento dei nostri fratelli, la inercindibile

e le cui conseguenze durano tuttavia presentante, dolorosissime. Dir voglio dei moti del Friuli, dei processi di Palma, di Udine, di Venezia, dell'agitazione e dal rimescolamento dell'emigrazione veneta, della dimissione del Comitato centrale di Torino e delle elezioni chiamate a riformarlo. Noi non verremo qui a fare recriminazioni, le quali non valgono rimediare al fatto, ma non invece ispirano ad inciprigire dissidi e divergenze che funestano fin troppo la patria nostra. I fatti parlarono con troppo evidente eloquenza, le previsioni si avverarono con troppo dolorosa precisione, perchè non resti ulteriore spazio a commenti, né luogo ad argomentazioni. Oggi stesso (chi il crederebbe?) oggi ancora v'ha tra voi chi da quei fatti tragge non solo discordi ma perfino opposte sentenze, e argomenti dell'ovvio dello scontro per ritenere la prova in primavera. Or bene, nessun consorzio politico può aspirare, a nostro avviso, al titolo e all'importanza di partito, se non faccia conto, oltre che dei programmi e delle aspirazioni, anche dei fatti e della realtà. È questo quell'elemento pratico, senza del quale vi potrà essere forse una legge di fenicoti addepi, ma non un gran partito politico.

Ritornando in primavera i moti del Friuli il partito d'azione mostrerebbe di essere costituito quell'elemento pratico, al quale accennavamo poco fa.

Se infatti con questi moti rivoluzionari il partito d'azione non crede di poter compiere da solo l'epoca sua, ma intende con essi di trascinare il governo italiano a far la guerra, in quale condizione troverà esso questo governo? Lo troverà sotto intenso

mo a rimuoverlo da quella via, in cui necessità politiche oggimai accettate, e il volere della nazione l'hanno avverso. I moti falliranno nuovamente, il tramutamento riuscirà a mille doppi più difficile, più lungo, più dispendioso, ma si compirà egualmente e nessun profitto ne verrà, salvo che alle difficoltà ineluttabili di situazione altre ma agguerrito artificiali inefficaci, e poi agguerrito.

Se il partito d'azione crede veramente che il paese non possa ulteriormente comportare questa ibrida situazione dell'essere o non essere padroni in casa propria, si crede che veramente nessun pericolo sia maggiore dell'attendere troppo lungamente e troppo passivamente gli eventi, non si occupi a creare difficoltà al governo in momenti già per sé difficilissimi. Non incagli con inconsulti progetti questo trasferimento e assetamento della capitale, ma invece usufrutti a tutt'uomo quel grande e aperto e costituzionale e inappellabile mezzo delle elezioni generali che si compiranno immediatamente. Mandi in maggioranza alla Camera, o almeno in proporzioni più ragguardevoli i suoi deputati, e dalle nuove aule parlamentari di Firenze intimi la guerra all'Austria e chiami i popoli all'insurrezione. Questa, a nostro avviso, sarebbe la tattica di un gran partito, questo sarebbe un programma ferace di grandi risultati, e non una meschina guerricciola di spediti alla giornata, i quali, lo ripetiamo, non giovano a nulla, o assai poco, e a qualche cosa, non è certo alla grande e definitiva soluzione della causa nazionale, non è certo al grande e durevole bene del paese. Né si obbietti che la ma-

combination, however, still remains open. It has been suggested that the Savoyard element in early San Francisco provided a natural link between the two communities.<sup>19</sup> French-speaking Savoy was ceded by the Kingdom of Sardinia to France in 1860, and thus natives of this region had, so to speak, a foot in both camps and could act as go-betweens. This was, for example, the case of Justinien Caire, who as a colleague of Larco, was involved in two of his transnational ventures. There is no evidence, though, that Savoyards were at all numerous in early San Francisco, and in any event their presence would only have facilitated the Italo-French symbiosis but could not have been its foundation.

Nor can the political alliance between Victor Emanuel II and Napoleon III be adduced to explain the cordial and productive relationship between

their respective subjects in faraway California. The contemporary European alignment conditioned, of course, diplomatic cooperation on the local level. In this light it is no surprise that Benjamin Davidson, agent of the French banking house that financed the Italian War of Independence of 1859-60, should be appointed acting consul of the Kingdom. But such political factors do not determine business partnerships and jointly shared benevolent associations, nor do they take into consideration the persistence of Franco-Italian cooperation for several years after the diplomatic estrangement of the two home countries in 1870. Besides, there were other clusters of inter-ethnic relationships in early San Francisco that should not be overlooked, and that such a political explanation cannot illuminate. Reference must be made to the wider Latin nexus that embraced Ital-

*A copy of the front page of the first Italian-American newspaper La Parola dated March 16, 1865. The newspaper was published and edited by Augustus D. Splivalo, who lived and worked in Larco's building during the years 1865 and 1866. He also served as secretary of the Italian Benevolent Society which Larco founded during 1865.*

ians, Frenchmen, Spaniards and Portuguese. It will be remembered, for example, that the Spanish *Crónica* had made its pages available to an early Italian-language bulletin. From 1875 to 1884, when the first Italian parish was dedicated, the Italians of the North Beach-Russian Hill area were served by the Spanish-oriented church of Our Lady of Guadalupe.<sup>20</sup> In addition, until the anti-Hispanic fervor which accompanied the Spanish American War of 1898, Columbus Day festivities in the City were jointly organized by the two nationalities. There are also indications of Italian-Portuguese cooperation. For instance, the first doctor of the Italian Mutual Benefit Society was Emanuel D'Oliveira, and for a time the local Portuguese Benevolent Society sent its sick members to the Italian Hospital.

A possible explanation of the above relationships is the reciprocal familiarity and forced interaction bred by the concentration of all the Romance immigrant groups in a so-called Latin Quarter of nineteenth-century San Francisco. However, instances of inter-Latin association can also be found in rural areas, where neighborhood concentration and physical propinquity were not involved. An interesting case is provided by the first French mutual aid society in California, founded in 1851 at Mokelumne Hill in Calaveras County. Membership in this organization was open to all French-speakers, but eligibility was also extended to the Piedmontese, Italians who speak a dialect only vaguely resembling French. And in Arizona, during the early period of settlement, Italian immigrants joined Hispanic fraternal organizations and fire companies in which several of them also became officers.<sup>21</sup>

The evidence of the Italian-French combination in

early San Francisco and the other cases of inter-Latin cooperation there and elsewhere demonstrate that politics and neighborhood concentration were but secondary factors. Linguistic and cultural affinity is of course an obvious and ready explanation. It is, however, only a precondition and not the determinant of inter-ethnic association. Otherwise, how can one explain why the Franco-Italian nexus, so characteristic of the early period of settlement, was practically nonexistent by the end of the century? Certainly, the cultural similarities between Frenchmen and Italians had not diminished significantly during the intervening years.

At this point, one might be tempted to argue that after 1880 mass emigration from the Italian South occasioned a regional reorientation within the community, and brought to the fore elements which were culturally different from France's northern Italian neighbors. In point of fact, however, even at the turn of the century, northerners (with the Ligurians as the largest and wealthiest group) still constituted the overwhelming majority of California's Italians and dominated the San Francisco colony, as they had at its inception fifty years earlier. Though southern immigration to California was growing, as late as 1903 fully seventy-three percent of the Italians who entered the State came from the North.<sup>22</sup>

In the final analysis, the key to understanding the origin and nature of inter-Latin cooperation in the early West lies in a comparative overview of the experience of other immigrant groups in America. Within this broader frame of reference, we find several instances of cross-ethnic association, even to the point of common identity, which conform to a general pattern that can be applied to the case under study. Before the so-called "Green Wave" of the 1840s and 1850s, the relatively few Irish Catholics in America joined the social and fraternal organizations of the far larger Protestant Scotch-Irish group (from

Consolato del Regno d'Italia  
S. Francisco 3 Marzo 1865

affari in genere

Brilliana

Chiedo scusa a V. E. se dal 12 Dicembre  
a questa parte ho dovuto negligenza la cor-  
rispondenza con questo Ministero; ma tale  
tanto fu il lavoro cui ebbi a far fronte da solo in  
quest'ultimi mesi, che mi fu assoluto-  
mente impossibile di trovare un momento di quiete per  
soddisfare a tale dovere. I normali atti d'ufficio  
aumentarono e vanno aumentando d'anni, e  
come accessorio, poi, mi caddero addosso d'un colpo  
due complicati affari, dei voluminosi atti d'una  
delle quali, ebbi a fare, a richiesta degli interessati,  
trippla copia e traduzione in inglese; un'imbarbie-  
ramento d'una nave, la vendita di due altre, ed un  
cambio marittimo. Con tutti che in due si fanno  
in brevissimo tempo, ma da solo sconcertano alquanto.  
Ho cercato in questo paese un collaboratore, ma non ne ho  
trovato alcuno di capace, per cui ebbi a scrivere al Ministero.

degli Affari Esteri

Procuratore



*Photograph of the first page of Giovanni Battista Cerruti's diplomatic report sent to his superiors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turin on March 3, 1865.*

Ulster) and shared with them a common identification as Irishmen. Similarly, in New York City, as the Puerto Rican community expanded after World War II, the smaller Spanish, Mexican and Cuban groups became affiliated and associated with it, often assuming positions of leadership.<sup>23</sup>

The following pattern emerges from these various cases: as long as an immigrant group is small in numbers, and therefore unable to provide an adequate base for autonomous organizations and to maintain a well-defined group identity, it tends to affiliate with, and sometimes to be absorbed by, a larger, culturally related ethnic community. The process may involve, as in the case of the Hispanics of New York, the convergence of several cognate groups. The lesson to be learned here is that ethnicity and group self-awareness are highly contextual and relative.

It can be suggested that this same process is essentially what happened in the case of inter-Latin association in California and Arizona, albeit not to the point of absorption. It also explains the Franco-Italian symbiosis in early San Francisco and why it failed to survive the accelerated immigration of Italians after 1880. During the decade that followed, stable and lasting community institutions emerged in the Italian colony (a national parish, an Italian Chamber of Commerce, two daily newspapers).<sup>24</sup> The Italians of San Francisco had by then clearly freed themselves from the need for French tutelage, so to speak, and could support an autonomous and viable organizational structure and, through it, nurture and sustain a separate and distinct group identity.

The demise of the Italian-French nexus roughly coincided with the passing of the man who had been

its pivot during the 1850s and 60s. To the last, Nicholas Larco maintained the link between the two communities that he had helped to forge: he died, in fact, in French Hospital, on March 12, 1878. He was buried by the Society of California Pioneers, of which he had been a life member and vice-president. Larco's decline in wealth and influence had begun several years earlier. In 1873, perhaps as a result of the rampant speculation of the period, his business interests suffered a severe setback from which they never recovered. From that same year, he no longer appears as an officer of the Italian Mutual Benefit Society, and he may well have withdrawn from it completely, since he was buried by the Pioneers. The following year, a man with whom Larco had had an intense, productive and mutually beneficial relationship, G. B. Cerruti, left his post as Italian consul in San Francisco. In 1875, one of his closest business associates and a native of the same Ligurian town, Luigi Lastreto, severed his relations with Larco to found his own import-export house in direct competition. As a note of human interest, an anonymous obituary related the following:

Mr. Larco had wealthy relatives in Italy who, since his failure, had been urging him to go back to his native country. His invariable answer was: "Not before I have succeeded in paying my debts," and he succumbed under his task.<sup>25</sup>

It is indeed ironic that this man who had amassed great wealth and had become the major luminary of his community died practically without property and burdened with debts. In the end, Larco fell victim to the same tragic fate that had tormented the fellow immigrants he and Cerruti sought to aid in 1865, and about which the following consular report speaks so eloquently.

It remains to be added that, though he died nearly penniless, Nicholas Larco nevertheless left a rich inheritance. The mutual aid society which he founded

VIEW. The Italian Hospital (left, foreground) was built by the Italian Benevolent Society and formally opened on September 12, 1869. It was a two-story brick building which still stands on the corner of Valley and Noe streets. The hospital closed in 1874.

still serves the Italian community of San Francisco and administers the only Italian cemetery in America. And in spite of specific historical and sociological factors which brought it about, the cordial and productive inter-ethnic collaboration in

which Larco played so great a role speaks against a narrow ethnocentrism and can serve as an inspiration to multicultural endeavors and activities which are today all too infrequent.



March 3, 1865

CONSULATE OF ITALY

*Report No. 7: General Affairs*

Excellency:

I beg Your Excellency's forgiveness for neglecting my correspondence with your Ministry in recent months, but my duties here have been so overwhelming that it has been impossible to find a moment to write you.

Normal office business has increased, and continues to increase at a rapid rate. In addition, I have had to attend to several time-consuming matters: executing two complicated claims (one of which in triplicate with an English translation), decking out a ship with flags, the sale of two other ships, and a maritime exchange—all matters that could be accomplished in a very short time, if performed by two people. I have been looking for an assistant in this country, but have not found anyone suitable, and thus have to write to La Plata for help. I hope to have a capable person here within the next three or four months. I am comforted by the thought that my lateness in writing you will not be of great harm to the service, for in the last two months I have managed to make a deposit in the treasury more than one-third as high as that made during the whole of last year.

I wish to acknowledge receipt of the following dispatches:

- No. 9 General Affairs of October 22, 1864
- No. 10 General Affairs of November 9, 1864
- No. 11 General Affairs of November 30, 1864
- No. 12 General Affairs of December 28, 1864
- No. 13 General Affairs of January 13, 1865
- No. 6 Successions of December 6, 1864
- No. 7 Successions of January 14, 1865

From Dispatch No. 9, I noted that Lorenzo Peri, of the class of 1843, cannot make a second medical visit. He has not come to the office, but as soon as I see him, I shall notify him of what the Royal War Ministry has informed me through you.

I have tried everywhere to locate Carlo Raspi, but no one has been able to give me any news of him. In accordance with my instructions, his name appears regularly in *La Parola*,<sup>26</sup> together with the names of other persons for whom we are searching.

As per instructions transmitted to me with your Dispatch No. 11, I have summoned Messrs. Monteverde and Devoto, members of the class of 1844 due to be called, to appear for examinations for their requested exemptions from military service, and I have asked Luca Descalzo to pick up the letter for him enclosed in your Dispatch. Descalzo has picked up the letter, but Messrs. Monteverde and Devoto have not yet replied to my summons.

Attached to Dispatch No. 12, I found the letter informing Emanuele Berri that His Majesty has consented to bestow upon him the title of Cavalier of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus,<sup>27</sup> and I transmitted the nomination to Mr. Berri on February 19th, together with a letter from this office. Upon receipt from London of the Decoration and Diploma of the Grand-Mastership of the Order, I shall dutifully present it to him.

I enclose a receipt of the Decoration bestowed upon our distinguished fellow-countryman Mr. Nicola Larco.

In addition to having the names of the three gentlemen [Francesco Basso, Pietro Castruccio, Giuseppe Zanola] printed, requesting them to appear at the Consulate, I have written to Mr. Zanola in Victoria and to Mr. Castruccio in Marysville, notifying them of the contents of the Dispatch to which I have the honor to reply.

As for Francesco Giorgiani, he died in fact about a year ago, but instead of a fortune, he left debts. His brother Antonio, who owns a fruit business here at 421 Washington Street,<sup>28</sup> wrote to Giorgiani's widow some time ago regarding the particulars of her husband's death and, on December 23, 1864, sent her the death certificate, which I authenticated at that time.

At the time of Dispatch No. 12, I received a letter from Francesco Marangolo of Messina, in which said gentleman, who is related to the widow in question, also asks for information about Francesco Giorgiani. I believe it superfluous to write Mr. Marangolo now, as Antonio Giorgiani has already written regarding this matter.

The printed matter announced in Dispatch No. 13 has arrived. It consists of a booklet which contains the list of His Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Offices abroad as of July 1, 1864, Circular 2682 of the Admiralty on weather reports, and notices to seamen based on Circular 2682. Other notices to seamen on the Italian terminology of the compass card have also arrived, but I have not yet received the *Official Gazette*.

While I am waiting for Carlo Bonfanti to come to the



office, I wish to mention that I am placing at Your Excellency's disposal, in care of my attorney, the 13.50 *lire* which you so kindly advanced for the registration and claim of the repeal of the power of attorney of said party.

I have already summoned Messrs. G. B. Raffetto and A. De Martini to appear, and once I have had them examined, I shall transmit the results of the examinations and the doctor's report to you.

Mr. [Raffaele?] Ancarani, to whom I have conveyed the information concerning him in Dispatch No. 13, wishes me to thank you in his behalf for the steps you so kindly asked the Royal Consul at Buenos Aires to take to persuade Mr. Pezzi to pay the debts he owes Mr. Ancarani. Mr. Pezzi's real name is Bianchi, and he lives at Mission Dolores, where he has a grocery store managed by his wife, whose name is Geronima Molinari. She is French by birth, but the daughter of an Italian. Letters to him are usually addressed to Mr. Luigi Bianchi, commonly known as Blengio, Grocer, at Mission Dolores, County of San Francisco.

According to what his wife told me, Mr. Bianchi has been in Tahiti since July 6, 1864, but he will be returning soon. I have learned from a letter written him by his brother-in-law, Gerolamo Ceroni, secretary of the Martinenghi, Macchiolo & Co. store in Turin, that Mr. Ceroni sent Mr. Bianchi a letter containing some pictures, through a family coming to San Francisco. Mr. Bianchi did not receive the pictures, and since the letter did not indicate the name of the bearer, he could not search for them.

In another report, I intend to describe the succession of Alessandro Alciatoire, but also must mention this subject here because it is related to a matter I have in hand.

In my Report No. 7, "Successions," of October 30, 1864, I had the honor to inform you that the court of Tuolumne County appointed a certain Nicolò Rossi of Diano Marina as administrator of the estate. He is the son of Giovanni Battista and of Paola Pizzarello. Mr. Rossi was managing a house entrusted to him by his brother Vincenzo, who had left San Francisco. According to the information I have received, his brother now resides in San Pier d'Arena (province of Genoa), and has an oil warehouse there. I have recently been informed that Nicolò Rossi shows signs (or pretends to show signs) of madness. The first evidence of this was the sale of all he possessed (and did not possess) to a certain Gaudin, a

Savoyard. Wishing to save the Alciatoire estate and to protect Rossi's absent brother, I consulted with Mr. Larco on the choice of a person residing in Tuolumne County who could be of assistance.

Mr. Larco put me in touch with a certain A. B. Preston, a local judge who is now a merchant, a very influential and capable person.<sup>29</sup> I asked Mr. Preston to verify the state of Mr. Rossi's affairs, to try to have the sale annulled if it in fact had taken place, to protect in my stead the property of the absentees, and to send me a report of his findings and actions. To date I have received no reply; but I shall probably be obliged to give some compensation to Mr. Preston, and I wish to be so authorized by Mr. Vincenzo Rossi and by the Alciatoire heirs.

While I am speaking of the Alciatoire estate, to which my Report No. 7, "Successions," of October 30, 1864 refers, I request Your Excellency to let me have the power of attorney and the personal certificates of the heirs as soon as possible. Please caution the heirs to be careful and have the certificates authenticated by the American Consul.

A certain Tommaso Delsoldato has come to this office for assistance. Born in 1816 or 1817, son of Antonio and of Teresa Pampaloni (both deceased), his family lived some years ago one-half mile outside Porta Prato in Florence, in the parish of San Jacopo di Polverosa. Delsoldato was an only child and therefore was entitled to his mother's entire dowry of almost one thousand *scudi*, a dowry which was insured on a house belonging to the father in Capannaccia, which is also in the parish of San Jacopo di Polverosa. Mr. Delsoldato has advised me that the house has been sold, but that he never received his share of the proceeds. His mother died twenty-two years ago. Since his father married a second time, to Anna Giuntini, who bore him five sons, Delsoldato fears that they may have appropriated his share; and he wishes to know how the sale of a house that had a mortgage could take place, and what he should do to claim his maternal inheritance, as well as his legacy from his father, who has been dead for fourteen years. Delsoldato came to this country when he was very young, and there is no one in Italy he can trust regarding this matter. He feels he may not be able to obtain reliable information from his half-brothers, as they are strangers to him. Through me, he is asking Your Excellency to look into the matter and to guide him accordingly.

In reply to the sheet that was attached to Dispatch No. 7, which I promptly submitted to Innocenzo Ragazzoni in

Victoria, today I shall mail you a letter received from Victoria addressed to Mrs. Angelica Ragazzoni of Turin.

A certain Madame Maria Pascal, born Maria Laget in Turin, now residing here at 826 Union Street, has no news of her only relative, Angelo Tinivella, who in 1850 was employed at the *Gazzetta del Popolo* [a Turin Daily]. The last letter she received from him was dated May 7, 1850. If by chance Mr. Tinivella is no longer alive, Madame Pascal wishes you to let her know the whereabouts of his sisters so that she may correspond with them.

The letter attached to Dispatch No. 10 was immediately delivered to Mr. Damiano Lanfranco, who has asked me to thank Your Excellency for your kind interest in his behalf.

Count Zeltner, Consul of France in Panama, has sent me a letter pertaining to royal service matters, which I hereby transcribe for accuracy's sake and to enable you to take whatever steps Your Excellency deems opportune:

Panama, January 1, 1865

Sir and Honorable Colleague:

I am really sorry for the time that has passed between your kind letter of August 17th and my reply. I hope, however, that you will be good enough to excuse me, considering the work that overwhelms me. Indeed, I have the French, the Mexicans and the Spanish to protect, not counting your compatriots, who give me equally a lot to do. I recognize, moreover, that there is in them a spirit of understanding that facilitates my work. And, on this subject, I wish to inform the Government of His Majesty the King of Italy that one of his subjects, the Consul of Colon, Mr. J. B. Donalisio, who is in charge of our French Consulate, has rendered me his daily services in this position for the past six years. These services, being gratuitous, I am going to recommend him to Mr. Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys [French Foreign Minister] for the Cross of the Legion of Honor, and I hope that he will succeed in obtaining it for him.

He has already been decorated with the Cross of Saints Maurice and Lazarus. I have not yet spoken to him about it—as the saying goes, it is not wise to sell the skin of the bear before it is killed—but my relations with His Excellency make me hope that once more he will grant my request.

Mr. Donalisio plans to leave this year and to make

only rare and short visits to Colon, and I believe it is well to speed the case, because there are a great number of Italians settled in the Isthmus and numerous interests to protect. If I am put in charge, I will do my best, as always, but it would be well if the Italian Government would give me detailed instructions through Paris.

The Marquis [Giovanni Antonio] Migliorati [Italian resident minister in Lima] has just married a compatriot, Miss Canevaro, in Lima, Peru, and does not speak about returning for a while. I believe therefore that you should write Turin concerning Colon and Panama.

Please accept . . .

Your Excellency, with the instructions you gave me in Dispatch No. 1, upon my departure for San Francisco on March 31, 1864, you asked me, among other things, to work to increase Italian navigation in these waters, and this became one of my principal goals. It is difficult, however, due to the state of our commerce, little acquainted thus far with joint-stock ventures, to find a shipowner who will consent to make a trial run at his sole risk. Consequently, I do not believe that we will have the satisfaction of seeing our flag in these waters for a long time to come, unless we decide to make exceptional facilitations, and until the results obtained under a system of temporary protection provide the necessary incentive to establish regular shipments directly from the Royal States. We share such similar convictions that, contrary to Royal Rules, I decided to deck out two great ships, the *Re d'Italia* ("King of Italy") and the clipper *Rocco Pratolongo*, with flags, even though I was unable to find a sea captain or a crew composed of at least two-thirds Italians for either ship. From the attached report for the Admiralty, Your Excellency will learn the details of said ceremony, and I also request your support in obtaining approval for my decision.

For some time now, Mr. Passano, an attorney who is secretary of the Municipal Commission of Carrara, has planned to build a monument to Pellegrino Rossi.<sup>30</sup> He sent us a circular aimed at promoting contributions among this community on behalf of the project. I immediately had it printed in the newspaper, accompanied by my personal appeal to all Italians; but to date no one has responded. The only way to succeed in matters of this sort is to knock on every door, but time has not permitted me to do so. Also, I did not deem it appropriate, because our compatriots are constantly asked to contribute to the needs of less fortunate

nate countrymen, and I feared I might abuse their generosity and jeopardize the results of other contributions which are more vital to the welfare of this colony.

On the same subject, I am answering Mr. Passano with an enclosed letter, and I include a check for twenty-five *lire* as my personal contribution.

The Italian colony here is not as wealthy as is commonly believed abroad. The vaunted riches of the California mines—for the most part, fabulous—attracted fortune-seekers from all parts of the world; and many of our countrymen, enticed by the continued exaggerations of a paid press, left modest but secure positions in Australia, Peru, Chile and La Plata to rush to California and partake of the glorified treasures of these mountains. Once here, far from finding the promised land, they had to take on arduous, poorly paid, and unsteady work; but, being too late to back out, they of necessity resigned themselves to their fate. Many could not endure the ensuing privations, hardships and toil, and perished in the mountains; others fell victim to the daggers of bandits and the arrows of Indians. A few for whom fortune had been less grim prepared to return to Italy to enjoy the fruits of their labors, only to contract diseases which robbed them of their savings and their health, medical care being very poor in these inhospitable places.

This situation is a particular calamity for those Italians whose aspirations were more limited and who preferred to settle in the various cities of the State, dedicating themselves to commerce and industry. Virtually every day they must record among their liabilities large sums given to the above-mentioned unfortunates, without even the satisfaction of knowing they have been definitely cured. For this reason, the Mutual Benefit Society was founded in 1858 by Cavalier Larco. However, this organization assists only its members, who comprise about fifteen percent of the Italian colony. The only recourse for others is to knock at the doors of their countrymen for assistance.

I became aware of this situation shortly after I arrived here, and began studying possible remedies. Unfortunately, the Society was at that time in the midst of a power struggle among rival factions, as I informed you in my Report No. 1 of June 25th. I believed it prudent not to become involved in its affairs until all differences were resolved. In time, the embittered spirits calmed down and I became a member, and was subsequently elected president of the Society at the meeting of January 7th. At the

first meeting I conducted, I urged the council to take steps to arrange assistance for those who needed it, and the council agreed that the only feasible solution would be to build a shelter for these unfortunates.<sup>31</sup> As we had only \$6,458.45 (i.e., 32,292.25 *lire*) in the treasury at the time (see the financial report in No. 221 of *La Parola*, which I am sending you separately), it was impossible to commence work on the project immediately. However, I was delegated to prepare an estimate of building costs and to dispatch copies to various Italian centers in the State in order to predispose them to make contributions when we begin our campaign for donations. To date I have had responses from Jackson, Columbia, Victoria, Virginia City, Sacramento and Newton, all in favor of the projected building.

Your Excellency may rest assured, however, that I shall not permit the first stone to be laid until the entire amount needed for construction has been raised. As I collect the funds, the money will be deposited with the French Savings and Loan Society, whose annual dividend has never been less than one percent per month. I shall keep you informed of the project's development, and I believe that construction will begin at an early date.

As I have previously advised you, there are a number of unfortunate individuals among the Italian community here. One who particularly worries me is Davide Cochi, son of Lorenzo and Marianna Cochi (he does not remember his mother's maiden name). He was born in Florence in 1837 and was a waiter by trade. This young fellow, after having spent a long period in the mines and having amassed about three thousand dollars, became gravely ill. He received bad medical care and, after a year, lost his sight. Some of his friends brought him to San Francisco last August when he had no more money, and since there is no free hospital here, they left him with me. I felt he should return to Italy and started a collection, raising \$162.00. But as Mr. Cochi's worsened condition prevented him from making the sea journey, I rented a room for him in the home of a certain Vittoria Maltesi from Sardinia, and urged Dr. Vincenzo Pollastri to treat him. The doctor kindly offered his services gratuitously. With the onset of the cold weather, Mr. Cochi asked to postpone his departure until spring, assuring me that he would make the voyage then. I consented, as the doctor confirmed that a long winter crossing would indeed be dangerous for him. But now that spring is almost here, I



*The Nicholas Larco Building as it looks today, located at 470 Jackson Street and owned by Marion Solari (Mrs. William Solari). It was constructed by Larco in 1852. He occupied the building until 1877. The building has housed the consulates of three nations: In 1856 and 1857, Larco was consul for Chile in San Francisco, with offices at this address. At the same time, Camilo Martin was the consul for Spain and appears to have had both lodgings and offices in Larco's building. Still later (1861 to 1864-65), French consul De Gazotta had his consulate here. The French consulate then moved next door to 472 Jackson Street (formerly 434 Jackson Street), where it remained until 1876.*



find that Mr. Cochi is proving unexpectedly reluctant to keep his word.

Several of his acquaintances have told me that he does not wish to return to Italy because he has had no contact with his family since leaving over sixteen years ago, and is ashamed to see them in his present condition. Mr. Cochi acknowledges that he has been an ungrateful son and says that he would prefer to die here rather than seek help from the family he abandoned.

I have threatened to abandon him myself; but how can I carry out the threat? He is blind, in poor health, and all of his friends from the old days have disappeared. In the meantime, the proceeds from the money collected for him have long since been spent; to start a new collection now would be an impossible task, particularly when funds are so urgently needed for the future hospital. Therefore, I am paying fifty dollars per month for his room, care and medicine. I beg Your Excellency to make some inquiries about the man's relatives to see if we might obtain assistance from them, or at least some encouragement from his father for the son's return home. If he left now, I would be glad to pay for the voyage out of my own pocket, so as to lift this burden from my shoulders; but if he continues to impose financial sacrifices on me, I shall not be in a position to help him much longer.

I am also very concerned about Luigi Bidoni, son of Giuseppe and of Anna Marossi, who was born in Venice on December 21, 1834. Mr. Bidoni earned some money inland in California, but came to this office for help two months ago, after he had been wounded by two rifle shots fired by an assassin in the Sacramento area. He also was afflicted by rheumatism. Having attempted without success to find some assistance for him among our countrymen, and seeing that otherwise he would have died in the streets, I invited him to my home; and thanks to the gratuitous services of the good Dr. Pollastri, Mr. Bidoni is now on his way to recovery.

This young man is well-mannered, speaks several languages, and wishes only to return to work and build a modest future for himself. Although he is still convalescing, I have found a position for him on the staff of *La Parola* and, starting this month, he will earn twenty dollars a month. I hope to find other sources of income for him also. Mr. Bidoni has neither written to nor received letters from his family for the past ten years. His parents do not know of his whereabouts, and he is not

sure whether they are still living. If Your Excellency could be so kind as to inquire into the past of this young fellow and then relate your findings to me, you would bring consolation to his parents and guidance to me as to how I can best help him.

Isacco Selmini, of the Milan Hospital, arrived here from Mexico in September of 1864, his legs covered with ulcerated sores. As he had no contacts in this area, and no means, he appealed to the Consulate. I started a collection at once, and was able to have him cared for with the proceeds. Unfortunately, he started doing hard work on a farm before he had completely recovered, and his condition became more critical than before. As a result, he is now a patient at Saint Mary's Hospital, where several Italians pay forty dollars per month for his care. Since he is suffering from an illness incurable in this country, I have reached an understanding with Mr. Larco to have him repatriated, and we are now collecting the necessary funds for his voyage. I do not know if we will be able to raise the entire sum (about \$150.00), but if not, I should like in this instance to debit the difference to the Royal Government.

With Dispatch No. 5 of July 25, 1864, you requested me to conduct a search for Carlo Caprile, born in Fontanabuona. I published his name in the newspaper and wrote, in vain, to Stefano Zerga, in Newton. Today, I was finally able to talk with an Italian who knows him and who is about to leave for Newton. He told me that Mr. Caprile still lives in Newton (in Eldorado County) and is fairly well-to-do. The probable reason he has sent no news of himself to his family is that he does not know how to write. I have asked the gentleman I spoke to today to write a letter for Mr. Caprile and to send it to me as soon as possible.

Towards the end of the day, Mr. G. B. Raffetto came into the office, and in accordance with the instructions I received with Dispatch No. 13 of January 13th, I proceeded to have him examined to determine the nature of his illness. I attach a report accompanied by a medical certificate. I have also included a letter for Mr. Raffetto's father.

A certain Ferdinando Mauri, son of Pasquale deceased, born in Meta/Piano, Castellamare, Naples, was part of the crew of the national brigantine *Il Veloce* ("The Speedy"), Giovanni Ecarina, captain, which left Naples on March 19, 1864, and arrived in New York in June.

While going back on board ship on June 24, 1864, Mr. Mauri was attacked by four men who threatened him with a pistol and forced him to board their lifeboat. They took him on board the American clipper *Norway*, Cumes, captain, which weighed anchor for California a few minutes later.

Unable to speak or understand a word of English, Mr. Mauri could not explain to the captain that he had not enlisted voluntarily, and thus could not even obtain permission to return to *Il Veloce* to collect his belongings. In consequence, the poor man had to endure a crossing which lasted several months, rounding Cape Horn during the severe winter, possessing only one shirt and one pair of trousers. I will not go into a lengthy description of the harsh treatment he was forced to endure, including beatings with a club and being hung from a crossbeam because he could not understand commands given in English. Suffice it to say that when Mr. Mauri came to this office for assistance, he was almost naked and in a very sorrowful state of health. Verifying his report, which I do not hesitate to believe, I welcomed Mr. Mauri to my home and provided him with clothing and medical care. I also found employment for him so that he could earn some money while waiting for a ship to take him home; and I contacted the Royal Minister in Washington, furnishing him the names of the agents of the *Norway* to see if the culprits could be found and forced to give Mr. Mauri the wages that he so painfully earned, as well as the ten dollars taken from him when he was abducted. I also wrote to the Royal Consul in New York in case he had already registered Mr. Mauri as a deserter, asking him to correct the record and to inform the appropriate authorities.

Now I must ask Your Excellency to pay Mr. Mauri's wife the remainder of his salary, amounting to twenty-eight dollars, which remained in the possession of Captain Ecarina. She should also receive all the effects her husband left behind on board *Il Veloce*, in the captain's quarters. There should also be twenty United States paper dollars in the chest containing Mr. Mauri's belongings. The name of Mr. Mauri's wife is Maria Caffiero, and she lives with their three children in the town of Meta, at the home of her mother-in-law, Luigia Porzia, widow Mauri.

After many misfortunes, Mr. Mauri is now well-employed (he earns thirty dollars a month, plus lodging

and food), and would like to accumulate some savings before returning home. Since he is exempt from land and sea duties, being an only son, he has requested permission to reside for a while longer in this country. As Captain Ecarina still has the document stating that Mr. Mauri is not subject to military service, I ask Your Excellency to advise me if I can grant his request.

I wanted to enclose last year's financial reports with this package, but time does not permit me to do so, and I shall mail them, without fail, the next time I write.

I have the honor of signing myself with the deepest respect,

Your humble and devoted servant,  
Giovanni Batta Cerruti

P.S. I was unable to finish the report for the Royal Admiralty to which I refer in this report and shall send it with the next package.

GBC

The photograph on page 360 is courtesy of the Italian Benevolent Society. All others were provided by The North Beach Museum, San Francisco.

## Notes

1. The full archival citation for Cerruti's consular report is as follows: Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, *Corrispondenza diplomatica e consolare*, busta 266, *Consolato di San Francisco*, n. 7, *affari in genere*, G. B. Cerruti to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, March 3, 1865. At the time, Gen Alfonso La Marmora was Foreign Minister. The original twenty-four page manuscript is written in Italian, with the exception of one and a half pages (the letter of Count Zeltner) in French.
2. Dino Cinel, "Conservative Adventurers: Italian Migrants in Italy and San Francisco" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1979).
3. For general information on the early period of Italian settlement in the City, see Cinel, "Conservative Adventurers," Chap. VIII; Deanna Paoli Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco, 1850-1930* (New York, 1978); Ernest S. Falbo, ed., "State of California in 1856: Federico Biesta's Report to the Sardinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *California Historical Society*



- Quarterly, LXII (1963), 311-333; Andres F. Rolle, *The Immigrant U'praised* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1968), Chap. XII; Francesco M. Nicosia, *Italian Pioneers of California* (San Francisco, 1960). For additional references, see American Italian Historical Assn./Western Regional Chapter, *The Italian American Experience in California: A Bibliography* (San Francisco, 1977). It is of interest to know that both Francesca Loverci of the University of Rome and Sebastian Fichera of the University of California, Los Angeles, are currently working on histories of the Italians in San Francisco covering the periods, respectively, 1848-1900 and 1850-1940.
4. The North Beach Museum, sponsored by Eureka Federal Savings and located in the Cavalli Building at 1435 Stockton St., was inaugurated in May, 1978. Devoted to the history of the North Beach neighborhood and to the varied heritage of its successive ethnic communities, the Museum has in a short time gained much well-deserved public interest.
  5. For a biographical sketch of Cerruti up to the time of his appointment, see Ministero per gli Affari Esteri, *Annuario diplomatico del Regno d'Italia per l'anno 1865* (Turin, n.d.), p. 111.
  6. Cf. Langley's *San Francisco Directory*, 1870, p. 840, and 1871, p. 893. Idwal Jones' brief account of Cerruti's tour of duty, in "Evviva San Francisco," *The American Mercury*, XII (1927), 157-158, is totally fanciful.
  7. Cf. Falbo, "State of California," 326.
  8. L. F. Byington and Oscar Lewis, eds., *The History of San Francisco* (Chicago-San Francisco, 1931), III, 370.
  9. In 1852. Cf. Carlo Dondero, "L'Italia agli Stati Uniti ed in California," *L'Italia Coloniale*, Vol. II, No. 5 (May 1901), 15.
  10. *La Scintilla Italiana* (San Francisco), March 18, 1878, p. 2: "the major luminary of our colony."
  11. Cf. Cinel, "Conservative Adventurers," p. 429. The restriction was later lifted, at an unspecified date.
  12. For the early history of this organization, see Philip M. and Sandra R. Montesano, *La Società Italiana di Mutua Beneficenza: The Italian Hospital, 1858-1874* (Colma, California, 1978). The authors incorrectly identify Spilvalo as a republican. On the Society's Italian Cemetery in Colma, established in 1899, see the recent article by Laurie Itow, "The Remains of Italians' History Here," *San Francisco Examiner*, June 20, 1979, p. B-2.
  13. Cf. Dondero, *L'Italia*, 15.
  14. Constructed circa 1852, the edifice which housed Larco's business still stands as the Solari Building East at 470 Jackson St.
  15. It would appear that quite a few other early Italian settlers also re-emigrated from Peru. Carlo Dondero, *L'Italia*, 14-15, estimated that of the approximately 300 Italians in the City in the early 1850s, one third had come from South America, principally from Peru and Argentina. The Mutual Benefit Society in 1862 made an agreement with its counterpart in Lima to extend services to their respective members who might take ill while sojourning in California or Peru. Cf. Società Italiana di Mutua Beneficenza Archives, Italian Cemetery, Colma, Ms. *Scrapbook*, p. 5.
  16. For all the preceding activities of Larco within and with the French community, see Langley's *San Francisco Directory*, 1860, p. 444; Daniel Lévy, *Les Français en Californie* (San Francisco, 1884), pp. 183-184, 202-203; California Historical Society Library, San Francisco, Ms. 249, Buenaventura Mining Co. Papers (1863); Dorothy H. Huggins, ed., *Continuation of the Annals of San Francisco* (San Francisco, 1939), Pt. I, 79.
  17. *Société Française d'Épargne et de Prévoyance Mutuelle/Società Francese di Risparmio e di Mutua Beneficenza*.
  18. For these interpretations, see Cinel, "Conservative Adventurers," pp. 426-427, 443, 448-449.
  19. Professor Francesco Loverci in a letter to the author of August 31, 1979.
  20. Cf. Luis M. de la Sierra, "Reseña histórica de la parroquia de Ntra. Sra. de Guadalupe," *La Azucena* (San Francisco), Vol. VI, Nos. 4-6 (April-June 1912), 29, and Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco*, p. 171.
  21. See, respectively, Lévy, *Les Français*, p. 195, and Phylis Cancelli Martinelli, "Italy in Phoenix," *Journal of Arizona History*, XVIII (1977), 321.
  22. Cf. Carlo Dondero, *Relazione sugli Italiani della Costa del Pacifico* (San Francisco, 1897), p. 9, and Rolle, *The Immigrant*, p. 96.
  23. For the above cases, see Carl Wittke, *The Irish in America* (Baton Rouge, 1956), pp. vi-viii; Carl Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1952), pp. 86-89; Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 101-103, 139-140, 239-240.
  24. St. Peter's Church (1884), now Sts. Peter and Paul; Italian Chamber of Commerce (1885); *La Voce del Popolo* began daily publication in 1889, followed by *L'Italia* in 1890.
  25. *Daily Alta California* (San Francisco), March 14, 1878, p. 1. Further information regarding Larco, aside from the sources already cited, may be found in the various San Francisco city directories, 1850-78; Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Gregory Yale Papers, documents in the case of Nicholas Larco vs. Gabriel Maldonado et al. (1860-61); Society of California Pioneers, San Francisco, Ms. *Mortuary Records, 1865-1884*, p. 73; "Catastrofi bancarie. Un poco di storia retrospettiva," *La Voce del Popolo* (San Francisco), March 29, 1893. Larco arrived in San Francisco on August 25, 1849, was admitted to the Society of California Pioneers in 1863, and served as its vice-president in 1869-70. Mr. Leon Rovetta has completed a biography, *Don Nicholas Larco & Associates, San*

*Francisco, 1849-1878*, which will soon be published.

26. A semi-weekly Italian-language newspaper published in San Francisco from 1863 to 1866. Monarchist in tendency, it was funded by the consulate through the insertion of official notices on its pages.
27. The *Ordine Equestre dei SS. Maurizio e Lazzaro*, a knightly order instituted in the sixteenth century by Emanuele Filiberto, Duke of Savoy.
28. Antonio Giorgiani, founding member and officer of the Italian Mutual Benefit Society and shareholder in the Buenaventura Mining Co.
29. Alvin Bacon Preston (b. 1829), pioneer, miner, and Justice of the Peace in Jamestown from 1856 to 1878. Cf. *A History of Tuolumne County* (San Francisco, 1882), pp. 416-417.
30. The moderate Minister of the Interior of Pius IX, whose assassination on November 15, 1848 precipitated the Roman Revolution and the flight of the Pope.
31. The Italian Hospital was finally erected in 1869, but closed in 1874 due to financial difficulties. See Montesano, *La Società Italiana*.

## REVIEWS

W. Michael Mathes, *Reviews Editor*

### The California Historical Society's Collection of Daguerreotypes

What first appears an elusive and ghostly image on a silver surface, the daguerreotype on closer inspection offers the viewer a glimpse of the past rendered in exquisite detail. More than 100 daguerreotypes are housed in the Library of the California Historical Society and they provide a fascinating visual resource to the early history of the state. Acquired over the years from various donors and sources, these are among the earliest photographic images that set forth the appearance of miners, mining sites and towns during the Gold Rush, and many individuals, notable and obscure in California's history.

The first practicable form of photography, the daguerreotype was introduced to the public by Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851) in 1839; for a relatively short period, ca. 1845-1860, daguerreotypes were widely produced throughout this country. The strengths of the new medium, as well as the varied uses to which it could be put, can be seen in the Society's collection. It encompasses a remarkable variety of subjects and includes work from the studios of leading daguerreans.

A daguerreotype was made by sensitizing a silvered copper plate over iodine (or mixture of iodine, bromine and chlorine) before exposing it in the camera. The image was then developed over fumes of mercury. What resulted was a one-of-a-kind image on a highly polished silver surface. Shielded by a metal mat and cover glass which were both usually sealed to the plate and held together by metal protectors, the daguerreotype was typically housed in a miniature case. Most commonly, these were shallow wooden cases covered with leather or paper embossed with decorative designs. The best examples of these images are characterized by sharp delineation of form, broad range of tonalities, and

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Martha Kennedy is CHS Photographs Curator. All of the photographs are from the CHS Library.





*Half plate daguerreotype. Group portrait, possibly the family of George Chapman, taken at one of Robert H. Vance's studios. Below, a street in Diamond Spring, El Dorado County, taken in 1854. Half plate daguerreotype.*



fine detail rivaled by few other photographic processes that have since evolved.

Once methods were devised to shorten the time of exposure and a portrait lens was developed, portrait daguerreotypes could be made in large numbers. Despite the cost, which tended to limit clientele to the more prosperous, the demand for such portraits was great. Not surprisingly, most of the daguerreotypes that have survived, including most of those that comprise the Society's collection, are portraits. This fact alone makes the rare daguerreotype of an outdoor scene highly prized and valued. Still, some daguerreans, such as Robert H. Vance (1824-1876) are known to have made extraordinary efforts to make such views. Following the flood of emigration to the gold fields in 1849, he came with the main purpose of taking photographs of the countryside, camps and towns. He returned east in 1851 and brought 300 whole plate views that were exhibited in New York and accompanied by a small printed catalog, a rare copy of which is in the Society's Library. Among Vance's images was a panorama of San Francisco taken from the head of Clay Street; unfortunately, neither this nor any of the other views exhibited are known to exist today.

Most outstanding among the Society's daguerreotypes of outdoor scenes is its seven panel panorama of San Francisco taken in 1851 by an unknown maker. A number of lesser known images in this collection also provide excellent visual documentation of the Gold Rush period. One of these is a half plate view of an hydraulic mining site—the Madomak Fluming & Mining Co. on the Yuba River. The unknown maker of this image positioned his camera high above the scene and recorded the network of flume, water wheels, and walkways. Not only a record of a specific site, the image also shows one of the more elaborate methods of mining developed to retrieve gold from the river

beds. Visible are seven figures stationed at work, as well as details of mining apparatus, rocks, river and hillsides. In contrast with this scene viewed from a distance is a close-up view of a street in Diamond Spring, El Dorado County. Eleven men and boys are shown in front of Wells Fargo and Advocate Offices in 1854 in this half plate. In front of the diagonal line of buildings, the figures are posed informally. Some stand or lean against posts or walls, one is seated, but all have paused deliberately to face the unknown photographer who has selected and captured this particular fragment of reality in its multitude of details. These include architectural features such as railings, signs and notices (including one for a performance by the Bateman children), and figures' clothing. Both daguerreotypes offer a wealth of visual detail tied to identified locations and a specific period. Such sources contribute to efforts to reconstruct a sense of the physical realities of life in towns and mining sites during the Gold Rush. In the preface to the catalog of his views, Vance's comments apply not only to his but other daguerreans' views of California:

. . . Much valuable information has been given in regard to the country, by several excellent works, but inasmuch as the sight of a place affords so much more pleasure, and gives so much better knowledge than the bare description possibly can, the Artist flatters himself that the accompanying Views will afford the information so sought after. These views are no exaggerated and high colored sketches got up to produce effect, but are as every daguerreotype must be, the stereotyped impression of the real thing itself.

What of the miners who lived and toiled in these settings? Unusual among the Society's holdings is a whole plate, a group portrait of nine miners. Tarnished and stained, the image is exceptional, nevertheless, for the overall impression suggested by the group is one of camaraderie, rather than the formal effect typically produced by a portrait





*Quarter plate daguerreotype of what is probably a mutant potato of a red skinned variety. As the first to be cultivated in the state were red-skinned, this image may show a potato that was grown in California. Inscribed on the verso of the plate: "7 1/2 lbs."*

daguerreotype. Seated or standing closely together, some rest their hands on one another's shoulders. One is struck not only by the youthfulness of the miners, but also by the variety of facial types and details of dress: some wear broad-brimmed hats or caps with visors, and two hold shovels.

Another singular image shows what is reportedly a seven and one-half pound potato. It is unclear whether the viewer sees one tuber with many lobes or several potatoes stuck together. Possibly this careful study of such a humble, homely subject was intended as a humorous still life; the unknown maker has expertly captured the texture of the potato resting on a table with a patterned cloth that has been beautifully tinted by hand with blue pigment. Where the image was made—in California, Europe, or elsewhere is open to question. European daguerreans, mindful of their artistic role, are known to have made daguerreotypes of still life subjects: Daguerre himself was known to have done so. It is also worth pointing out that the high price of potatoes in and around San Francisco in 1849 resulted in a crop that far exceeded demand and glutted the market later in 1850. These conditions suggest that

such an unlikely subject could have been chosen by a daguerrean artist working in either California or Europe.

A daguerreotype of a painted portrait of Sally Innes Thorton illustrates another unusual use of the new medium. A daguerreotype of the woman herself would, of course, surpass this image as an accurate likeness, but her death may have preceded the invention of photography. Using powdered pigment, the daguerrean or possibly an assistant skillfully tinted the surface of the image with flesh tones, red, black, white and blue. In this instance, the new photographic process furnishes a faithful record of the older medium of painted portrait.

With some reason, much has been made of the conditions under which daguerreotype portraits were taken. To a considerable extent, the stiff, formal expressions and poses of subjects can be attributed to the uncomfortable positions that had to be endured for long exposures, often under bright sky lights. The few records that survive indicate that the time of exposure at a sitting varied from twenty to forty seconds. The heavy supporting apparatus for the back and head, that can be seen in many examples, could hardly have added to the sitters' pleasure.

An outstanding daguerrean, however, could rise above such problems and produce excellent portraits, as opposed to merely painful likenesses. An example of such work can be seen in a group portrait, possibly the family of George Chapman, taken at one of Robert H. Vance's studios. In this well composed image, with the dominant figure of the man flanked by two women who resemble one another, the placement of the child between the couple on the left softens the formality of the whole group and underscores the relationships between the figures. Regarded by many as the finest daguerrean in California, Vance established galleries in San Francisco, Sacramento, Marysville, and San Jose. His



*Madonak Fluming & Mining Co., Yuba County. Half plate daguerreotype.*



daguerreotypes and ambrotypes won "First Premium" at State Fairs. His "First Premium Daguerrean Galleries" were among the few, moreover, to offer the option of stereoscopic daguerreotypes, an example of which is among the Society's collection, as well as other fine portraits made at Vance's studios.

In addition to work produced by Vance and the talented operators he employed in his galleries, daguerreotypes by or from the studios of William Shew (1820-1903), Charles F. Hamilton (active ca. 1852-1858), the partners Seth Lewis Shaw (1818-1872) and George H. Johnson, the partners Charles H. Fontayne (1814-1858) and William

Southgate Porter (1822–1889), Jesse H. Whitehurst (ca. 1820–1875), and others are numbered among the Society's holdings. For the most part, attributions of works to makers are based upon names stamped on mats and embossed on linings of cases. Such sources do not provide absolutely certain evidence for attribution, but, in most cases, they present the best available. Makers of cases, incidentally, had their names similarly imprinted, and many daguerreans, prior to becoming makers of images, were makers of cases.

Daguerreotypes attributed to known makers are of greatest interest, perhaps, to collectors and students of the history of photography. Equally significant in this collection are portraits of persons prominent in California's history, and most such images are by unknown makers. One of the most important of these is a portrait of John Augustus Sutter (1803–1880). It provides a record of the man's appearance shortly after the discovery of gold on his property. Along with external signs of prosperity such as the two watch chains and rings (which are tinted), the man projects a despondent gaze, as if mindful of all the ambiguous repercussions of the discovery of 1848. Another fine daguerreotype shows a woman identified as Maria Paula Rosalia Vallejo Leese (1811–1889), wife of Jacob Primer Leese (1809–1892), early entrepreneur of San Francisco, and a sister of General Vallejo. In this rare early image of an Hispanic woman, the unknown photographer has skillfully used lighting and composition that are flattering to his subject. Details such as jewelry and embroidered purse, as well as the tooled binding of the book are hand tinted, and emphasize the social status of Rosalia Vallejo. In good condition, this image is housed in an unusual double hinged case.

A half plate by Jesse H. Whitehurst represents a fine portrait of Edward Gilbert (1819–1852) and Edward Cleveland Kemble (1828–1886), two of the

three founders of the *Alta California* newspaper in San Francisco. Another group portrait, this one by an unknown maker, affords an example of a charming family portrait. Seated side by side, Henry P. Haun and his wife each holds one of their children. In contrast to the fixed, upright postures of the adults, each child leans back against a parent for support. Probably as a result of the children's tendency to move during exposure, their forms appear less distinct than the parents'. Haun was appointed to serve as U.S. Senator from California upon the death of David C. Broderick in 1859. He did so briefly until January of 1860, when he was succeeded by Governor Milton S. Latham. These and other daguerreotypes in the Society's collection clearly represent some of the earliest photographic likenesses of individuals who played a vital part in the early history of the state; some of these, moreover, represent the only images that are known to exist of certain individuals, whether prominent or unknown.

Among the precious and fragile objects in the Society's collections the daguerreotypes preserve far more than mere traces of California's past. Excellent copy prints and negatives of the images have been made and may be viewed in the Library in Shubert Hall. A checklist of the daguerreotypes has been completed to facilitate use of the collection. Original images may be seen by appointment with the Curator of Photographs.

All of the photographs are from the CHS Library.

## Book Reviews

### *Junípero Serra in His Native Isle (1713-1749).*

By Dina Moore Bowden; Photos by Stefan Laszlo (Palma de Mallorca, Spain: Dina Moore Bowden, C/Jesús, 14A, 9C, 1976. 170 pp. \$25.00).

### *An Archeological and Restoration Study of Mission La Purísima Concepción.*

By Fred C. Hageman and Russell C. Ewing, edited by Richard S. Whitehead. Santa Barbara Bicentennial Historical Series, Vol. 5 (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, 1980. xxxi, 307 pp., 323 photographs, appendices, notes, index. \$29.75).

### *King of the Missions, A Documentary History of San Luis Rey de Francia.*

Edited by Francis J. Weber (Los Angeles: 1980. xi, 237 pp. \$12.00).

### *The Pronto Mission, A Documentary History of San Diego de Alcalá.*

Edited by Francis J. Weber (Los Angeles: 1980. xiii, 262 pp. \$12.00).

### *The Carmel Mission, from Founding to Rebuilding.*

By Sydney Temple (Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1980, x, 166 pp., illus. \$5.95).

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*Reviewed by W. Michael Mathes, Professor of History, University of San Francisco and Reviews Editor, California History; specialist and author in the field of Spanish California history.*

Although it is one of the most heavily treated topics in the history of the United States, that of the missions of California continues to hold interest to researchers and students of the field. Clearly, with the continued production of books relating to the history of California's missions, not all has been said or written.

The late Mrs. D.M. Bowden, a long-time resident of Mallorca, has produced a beautiful book on Serra's early life. Tracing Fray Junípero's childhood and education in Petra, his teaching in the Lullian College in Palma, and his preaching throughout the island as related by Fathers Palóu and Geiger, Mrs. Bowden takes the reader around Mal-

lorca. Reconstructing Mallorcan life and customs of the early eighteenth century in prose and poetry, the text is complemented by excellent photographs of buildings, landscape and events Serra would have seen in his time. Nicely printed, this book complements the work of Father Geiger on Serra in California, and is a fine contribution to literature on the founding Franciscan.

Published as volume five of the Santa Barbara Bicentennial Historical Series under the general editorship of Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., this new work on La Purísima provides interesting and valuable insight into a little explored aspect of California mission history. During the Great Depression, the WPA and CCC devoted thousands of man-hours to the complete restoration of Mission La Purísima Concepción near Lompoc; authors Hageman and Ewing prepared archeological and historical reports of the project, made public herein for the first time.

Part One, An Architectural Study of the Mission La Purísima Concepción, California, details the archeological investigations and excavations from November 30, 1934 to March 31, 1938 of the second (post 1812 earthquake) site, and other research aspects of restoration, along with methods of construction employed in the original buildings. Following the thesis that approximation of materials and methods used in original construction would produce the most faithful reconstruction, other missions were studied for details, and problems of materials, permanence and modern security were considered prior to reconstruction. As a part of the discussion of actual reconstruction, architectural plans and photographs of progress are included. This first section concludes with appendices of technical analyses of original materials, memoranda on planning, tile manufacture, paint pigments and early efforts at restoration, as well as footnotes.

In all, coupled with the excellent photographic record, the Hageman report presents a fascinating account of restoration, albeit in a time when government funds and cheap labor were readily available, as well as a guide for sound restoration procedure. It should serve as a guide for future restoration projects; unfortunately, in the case of some missions, this is too late.

Part Two, Mission La Purísima Concepción, California, contains the Ewing report of the historical background of the mission. In six chapters, the past of La Purísima is traced from founding in 1787, through early success, the 1812 earthquake and redevelopment, decline, secularization, sale and ruin to 1900. Research for the study was ex-





*The cattle brand of  
Mission San Diego de Alcalá.*

tensive for its time, and employed source material found within California, however much new data could be gleaned from sources discovered in the past forty years, especially from the work of the late Maynard J. Geiger. Possibly the only major fault of this new book, which should form a part of any collection of Californiana, is the lack of an updated bibliography to provide the reader with an exhaustive contemporary listing of sources of La Purisima history.

With the publication of two new works on San Luis and San Diego, Msgr. Weber brings to eight, the number of volumes in his Documentary History series. Following the same format as earlier titles, brief vignettes extracted from Spanish mission reports, correspondence, and descriptions by early foreign visitors and U.S. traders, explorers and spies, trace the growth and decline of each mission. Newspaper and magazine articles by tourists, restoration reports, and recent events, also primarily from newspapers, bring the chronology to date of publication. Also, as in former volumes, these documentary extracts are from a varying level of sources: original accounts, romanticized journalism, and scholarly publications by such historians as Englehardt, Geiger and Guest. Nicely printed and bound, these two volumes are useful additions to Californiana and will be welcomed by researchers in mission history as well as collectors of the series.

Dr. Temple's short work on San Carlos Borromeo (Carmel) presents a popular, somewhat romantic and uncritical overview of the history of the mission from founding to the present. The first two chapters treat of Serra and his establishment of the mission as the center for

expansion of the system, and of the post-Serra development of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Chapter three deals with the decline of Monterey, growth of ranches, influx of foreigners, and the eventual secularization of the mission, its abandonment and ruins.

By far the best part of the book is chapter four treating the restoration of the mission from the late nineteenth century to the present. Truly a tribute to the late and wonderful Harry Downie, this chapter details his lifelong work at restoration.

Unfortunately the anarchical spelling and accenting of Spanish and paucity of bibliography (there is no mention of works by Geiger, Guest, Tibesar or Kennealy! among others), as well as some very poor drawings, will keep this book from becoming an important part of California mission literature. Apart from the section on Downie, it presents no new information; however, it is useful as a guide for visitors to Carmel.

### *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide.*

By Thomas C. Barnes, Thomas H. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981. 147 pp.).

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*Reviewed by Richard Griswold del Castillo, Professor of Mexican American Studies, San Diego State University, author The Los Angeles Barrio 1850-1890: Social History (1980).*

As the title indicates, this booklet is meant to assist researchers as they wend their way through the voluminous and occasionally confusing manuscript collections relating to New Spain's far northern frontier. It was compiled originally to assist the University of Arizona's Documentary Relations of the Southwest (DRSW) research team. The DRSW is a project which has as its goal the indexing and publication of selected Spanish colonial documents on the northern provinces. Eventually this will mean compiling a computer retrievable file of thousands of manuscripts on the history, ethnohistory, and geography of the area. The guide provides a simple and straightforward discussion of background information essential to understanding the manuscripts. It also contains a detailed discussion of the project methodology and

computer coding scheme, more intended for the DRSW research assistants than for general researchers.

Scholars, whether or not they use the DRSW project materials, will find this guide extremely useful. It brings together under cover a wide variety of topics such as a review of manuscript collections in libraries in the U.S., Mexico, and Europe, a bibliography of guides to these collections, a clear outline of the changing structure of the colonial government, Spanish colonial paleography, weights and measures, money and currency, lists of colonial officials and many other topics.

The changing and often confusing social, political, and economic history of the colonial frontier will be easier to understand by using this guide.

### *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906*

By Eric Saul and Don Denevi. (Celestial Arts, Millbrae, California, 1981. 168 pp. \$25.00.)

### *San Francisco, 75th Anniversary, Special Souvenir Edition, 1906-1981.*

By Ron Ross. (Ron Ross Productions, San Anselmo, California, 1981. 54 pp. \$4.00.)

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*Reviewed by John B. McGloin, S.J., Department of History, University of San Francisco.*

Eric Saul, the director of the Presidio Army Museum and Don Denevi, an administrator at Merritt College, Oakland, have collaborated in producing a significant addition to the literature of San Franciscana. Their carefully assembled volume was published as a partial commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the San Francisco earthquake, which afflicted the city on April 18, 1906 and which was followed by many fires.

A news release from the publisher mentions that "of the 200 photographs used in this volume, 75% have never before been published." Subject to correction, this reviewer must demur in a courteous manner: in his three decades of teaching the San Francisco story at USF, he seems to have come on a good number of these interesting photographs—although, memory failing as to every detail, some of these might have been viewed in private collections, archives and the like. Wherever the precise truth

lies here, it is indisputable that many readers will be both delighted and informed at this outstanding collection of photographs which they will be viewing for the first time. This alone lends worth and significance to the Saul-Denevi book. Faithful and successful ferretings always merit the praise which will be given to this volume.

A few statements in the text do not stand up under investigation: for example, on p. 1, there is the amazing assertion that the Manila Galleons made their way south to Panama and around the southern tip of South America! Not so. Obviously it was difficult enough for these craft to head eastward to snug harbor in Acapulco on mainland Mexico after veering eastward around Cabo San Lucas and the tip of Baja California. On the same page we read that, "in 1776, the city of San Francisco was founded." Hardly true, for San Francisco came into being in three separate and important steps. First came the Presidio (September 17, 1776) which, several weeks later, (October 9, 1776) was followed by the Mission of San Francisco de Asis, commonly called Dolores; finally, (June 25, 1835) the Pueblo of Yerba Buena, from which most of the present city was founded, was established. The name of San Francisco became official on January 30, 1847. Another statement which is not correct (p. 18) assesses Mayor Eugene Schmitz as the "graft ridden, boodling pawn of political boss Abe Ruef." This characterization is found in practically all of the traditional Schmitz accounts; however, I believe that Schmitz, while too tolerant of things going on around him, was never the recipient of bribes. The only one who swore that he was, Abe Ruef, was and yet remains a perjurer whose assertions do not merit credibility. The authors are on surer ground with their correct assertion that Schmitz proved himself an "able and capable administrator during the tragic days which followed the fire and earthquake." This he certainly was.

With the above observations duly recorded, it remains a distinct pleasure to welcome the results of the labors of the two authors. They have done their work well and the results of their labors is evident in the interesting pages and photographs of this volume.

Of more modest proportion but also of considerable worth is the special souvenir edition called *San Francisco, 75th Anniversary*. Ron Ross, who proudly owns to hail from the eastern United States and who, just as proudly, admits that he has left his heart, permanently, in San Francisco, has carefully reproduced fifty significant and graphic views of the days of 1906. All combine to tell a vivid story

of those never to be forgotten days. There is no text as such—only captions identifying all of the views. Evidently, Ron Ross planned his book as yet another proof that pictures speak louder than words.

It may be pointed out that the "Mission Dolores founded in 1776" is a bit confusing. The first mission was indeed founded on October 9, 1776; however, the mission portrayed in the text which, incidentally, is the oldest building in San Francisco, dates from 1791. The adjacent brick church which was devastated in 1906 is called a "basilica" by Ross; actually, that title was acquired only in 1952, and by an entirely new parish church building. It is hoped that Ross will not overly object to a purist's mention of two inaccurate spellings: the Fairmont Hotel is spelled "Fairmount" several times and St. Brigid's Church is spelled "Bridgid." Small points indeed: the important thing is that Ross, at a modest and well deserved price of \$4.00 has provided a real bargain which should be acquired by many of those who love The City.

### *The Mexican-American War: An Annotated Bibliography*

Compiled and edited by Norman E. Tutarow (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981. xxix, 427 pp.).

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*Reviewed by W. Michael Mathes, Professor of History, University of San Francisco, Reviews Editor and specialist in Mexican history.*

The War of 1847, Mexican War or Mexican-American War, the first offensive conflict of the United States and overt beginning of Manifest Destiny, has been the subject of extensive historical and political study. Due to the controversial nature of the conflict and the changing roles of Mexico and the United States in North America and the Hemisphere, the War will continue to attract scholars. Dr. Norman Tutarow has greatly assisted these future researchers interested in the field with the publication of this awesome bibliography, the result of many years of research and extensive travel.

Containing 4,537 entries, each annotated as to contents, importance, breadth, etc., this bibliography is divided into useful and highly manageable sections. The first of these, Reference Works, is further subdivided into areas such as



*General Stephen Watts Kearny, one of the Mexican-American War's better known military leaders.*



collections, bibliographies, government documents, dissertations and general references. The second section, Manuscript Collections, sets the system of subdivision employed in subsequent sections, with some variations. Manuscripts are subdivided into such areas as diaries, journals, biographies, military and naval units, states, campaigns, medicine, etc. Section three lists published government documents from the United States, Mexico and Great Britain, and section four indexes the holdings of the National Archives of the United States. Periodical literature and books, sections five and six, are subdivided into areas of foreign relations, causes, general history, military units, battles and campaigns, states, biography, tactics, army, navy, marines, treaties, medicine, opposition, religion, literature (fiction), commerce, etc. The final two sections list theses and dissertations and graphics and cartography.

In addition to the above entries, Dr. Tutarow supplies appendices of chronology of the war, U.S. officials, U.S. regimental organization, naval vessels, demography of U.S. voting on the war, military strength and casualties, statistics relative to the nature of works on the war, and twenty-one maps. An introductory overview of the war and its literature opens the work, and an analytical index closes it.

In that California became a part of the United States as a result of this conflict, the state accounts for a substantial number of entries. While it would be easy to estimate that at least seventy percent of the entries in some way bear on California history, it is certain that 283 are directly related to it.

Obviously from the above, the contents weigh heavily toward United States sources. This is the case, but not as a result of deficient work; unfortunately Mexican archival sources are, in many instances, virtually inaccessible or more often, poorly organized, and printed sources often did not survive occupation. Finally, this tragic episode in the history of two neighbors is not generally attractive to Mexican writers.

Well organized and clearly printed, this new bibliography is an absolute necessity for all scholarly libraries, and for all researchers interested in the subject.

All of the photographs are from the CHS Library.

ERRATA—Spring 1981 *California History*  
 "Los Angeles, 1781-1981"

Dear Editor:

Please note that the special Los Angeles bicentennial issue of *California History* failed to inform its readers of the city's correct original name. The original Spanish name of Los Angeles was "La Reina de los Angeles" (The Queen of the Angels) and not "La Nuestra Señora de los Angeles" (Our Lady of the Angels). This has been a matter of confusion for some time since many writers and historians have mistaken the naming of the Los Angeles pueblo with the naming of the Los Angeles river, which was called "El Rio de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Porciúncula."

I documented the correct naming of Los Angeles in my article: "Los Angeles, California: The Question of the City's Original Spanish Name," *Southern California Historical Quarterly* (Spring 1973). An excellent account of the founding of Los Angeles (with the correct original title) may be read in Edwin A. Beilharz, *Felipe de Neve, First Governor of California* (California Historical Society, 1971).

Prof. Theodore E. Treutlein  
 Professor Emeritus of History  
 San Francisco State University

*In fairness to the authors of the bicentennial issue it must be noted that they were allowed to use their own interpretation of the naming of Los Angeles as there are still some historians who feel that the original name of the city was never made clear by those Spanish officials who first bestowed it. The Guest Editor therefore decided to side-step the "name calling" issue and leave it up to each writer's own feelings. Historical documentation, however, as well as most scholarly opinion does agree with Professor Treutlein in stating that the correct name was "La Reina de los Angeles."*

## In Memoriam

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HENRY MILLER BOWLES, former president of the California Historical Society died of accidental causes on November 7, 1981.

He was born in San Francisco February 14, 1918. His grandfather had been president of the American National Bank, the predecessor of the American Trust, a bank of which Henry's father, George McNear Bowles, had been vice-president. He was also the grandson of George McNear, one of the pioneers of the state's grain industry. Henry's mother, Beatrice Nickel Bowles, was a granddaughter of Henry Miller, California's "Cattle King."

Henry Bowles attended local schools and continued his education at Colorado School of Mines, where he received a degree in engineering in 1940. In 1941 he entered the U.S. Army as a private and the following year married Constance E. Crowley, also a member of a pioneer family.

Henry remained in the Army for the duration of the War, being discharged in April 1946, having obtained the rank of major.

Following his service in World War II he was associated with the Standard Oil Company of California as an engineer. In 1955 he returned to his family's ranching business, becoming president of Miller and Lux, Incorporated, a position he retained until his death. He was also president of Buena Vista Farms, a partner of Bowles Farming Company, and president of B.F. Chemical Company. Henry served as a director of J.G. Boswell Co., Midland Tractor Co., and Bio-Kinetics, Inc.

Henry Bowles' association with the California Historical Society was long and distinguished. Joining the Society in 1950, he was elected a director (Trustee) in 1962, serving until 1971. He was president in 1966 and 1967. Henry was also chairman

of the CHS Business Committee for nine of the eleven years he served.

He was a leader in many cultural endeavors and public service including president of the Mirenda Lux Foundation, president of the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, member of the San Francisco Library Committee, vice-chairman of the Graduate Theological Union, treasurer of the Friends of the Bancroft Library, a director of the Book Club of California, Trustee of the San Francisco Fine Arts Museums, Chairman of the Board of Grace Cathedral, and a director of the Pacific Union Club.

Since 1975 Henry was a member of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem and only a week before his untimely death he was invested as a Knight of the Order at Grace Cathedral.

Henry found relaxation in hunting and fishing and in his splendid collection of stamps, fine books, and ceramics; the latter mostly eighteenth century French porcelain.

A quiet gentleman, avoiding publicity, he was devoted to his family and to the philanthropic needs of his community.

A saddened CHS offers their sympathy to his widow, Constance, his daughter Beatrice, his two sons, Henry and Philip, and his brother George.

Albert Shumate, MD

President Emeritus, California Historical Society

## California Check List

By Joy Berry, *Reference Librarian*

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent publications, including reprints or revised editions, which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

- Arrigoni, Patricia. *Making the Most of Marin*. Photographs by Michael E. Bry. Novato: Presidio Press, 1981. 288 pp. Publisher, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, 94947. \$7.95.
- Barthel, Joan. *A Death in California*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981. \$14.95. A study of the murder case involving socialite Hope Masters.
- Bayless, Dorothy Martin. *Index to Paolo Sioli's 1883 History of El Dorado County, California*. Sacramento: Author, 1981. Author, 6531 Driftwood St., Sacramento 95831.
- Boyarsky, Bill. *Ronald Reagan: His Life and Rise to the Presidency*. New York: Random House, 1981. 205 pp. \$12.95.
- Brodsky, David. *L.A. Freeway: An Appreciative Essay*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981. 224 pp. \$17.95.
- Brumgardt, John R. and Larry L. Bowles. *People of the Magic Waters: The Cahuilla Indians of Palm Springs*. Palm Springs: ETC Publications, 1981. 122 pp. Publisher, Drawer 1627-A, Palm Springs, 92262. \$12.95.
- California Coastal Commission. *The California Coastal Access Guide*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981. 224 pp. \$7.95.
- Carey, Gary. *All the Stars in Heaven: The Story of Louis B. Mayer's M-G-M*. New York: Dutton, 1981. \$18.50.
- Carnal, Alan. *California Crazy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981. 204 pp. \$9.95.

- Clark, David L. *Los Angeles, a City Apart: An Illustrated History*. 1st edition. Woodland Hills: Windsor Publications, 1981. 252 pp. Publisher, 21220 Irwin, Woodland Hills, 91364.
- Coan, Eugene V. *James Graham Cooper: Pioneer Western Naturalist*. Moscow, Idaho: University Press of Idaho, 1981. 210 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 3368, University Station, Moscow, Idaho 83843. \$11.95.
- Copeland, Estella M. *Overland By Auto in 1913*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society, 1981. 86 pp. Publisher, 315 West Ohio St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. \$2.00.
- David, Saul. *The Industry: Life in the Hollywood Fast Lane*. New York: Times Books, 1981. \$12.95.
- Dixon, Maynard. *Images of the Native American*. San Francisco: California Academy of Sciences, 1981(?). 96 pp. Publisher, Scientific Publications Dept., Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, 94118. \$20.00.
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- Fox, Stephen. *John Muir and His Legacy: The American Conservation Movement*. New York: Little, Brown, 1981. \$17.50.
- Garner, Van H. *The Broken Ring: The Destruction of the California Indians*. Tucson, AZ: Westernlore Press, 1981. 260 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 35305, Tucson, AZ 85740. \$9.50.
- Geary, Mary DeForest. *A Giant in Those Days*. Brunswick, GA: Coastal Books, 1981. Publisher, 1208 Gloucester St., Brunswick, GA 31520.
- Hammond, Richard. *The San Joaquin Valley*. Photographs by Richard Hammond. Writing (and printing) by Nick Zachreson. Visalia: Rick Hammond Photography, 1979. 141 pp. Publisher, 705 S. Court St., Visalia, 93277. \$25.00.
- Higham, Charles. *Bette: The Life of Bette Davis*. New York: Macmillan, 1981. \$12.95.



## Check List

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- Holland, F. Ross, Jr. and Henry G. Law. *The Old Point Loma Lighthouse, Cabrillo National Monument, San Diego, California*. Historic Structure Report. Denver, CO: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 1981. 248 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225.
- Hopkins, Henry. *50 West Coast Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in California*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1981. \$17.95.
- Lamson, Berenice. *There's Only One Coke*. In collaboration with the late Dr. R. Coke Wood. Sonora: Mother Lode Press, July, 1981. Author, 3253 Calhoun Way, Stockton, 95209. \$12.00.
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- Lewis, Ernest Allen. *The Fremont Cannon: High Up and Far Back*. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1981. 168 pp. \$32.50, limited edition.
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- McCall, Dewitt Clinton III. *California Artists 1935 to 1956*. Bellflower: De Rus Fine Art Books, 1981. 212 pp. Publisher, 9100 Artesia Blvd., Bellflower, 90706. \$50, Library binding; \$150, Deluxe edition.
- Magnin, Cyril and Cynthia Robins. *Call Me Cyril*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. \$12.95.
- Marinacci, Barbara and Rudy. *Take Sunset Boulevard: The Fabulous New Way to See L.A.* Novato: Presidio Press, 1981. Publisher, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, 94947. \$7.95.
- Meyers, George. *Yosemite Climber*. Berkeley: Wilderness Press, 1981. 96 pp. Publisher, 2440 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 94704. \$17.50.
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- Perry, John. *Jack London: An American Myth*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1981. 356 pp. \$21.95 (cloth); \$10.95 (paper).
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- Smith, Harry. *Harry Smith: Magic Moments*. Los Angeles: Stephen White Editions, 1981. Publisher, 752 N. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, 90069. \$19.95.
- Snaer, Seymour. *San Francisco 1939, an Intimate Photographic Portrait*. Livermore: Working Press, 1981. 48 pp. Publisher, Box 687, Livermore, 94550. \$5.95 (paper).
- Swett, Ira L., et al. *Sacramento Northern*. Third printing with updated information. Glendale: Interurban Press, 1981. 208 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale, 91205. \$18.95.
- Theatre Directory of the Bay Area, 1981*. San Francisco: Theatre Communications Center of the Bay Area, 1981. Publisher, 1182 Market St., San Francisco, 94102. \$7.00.
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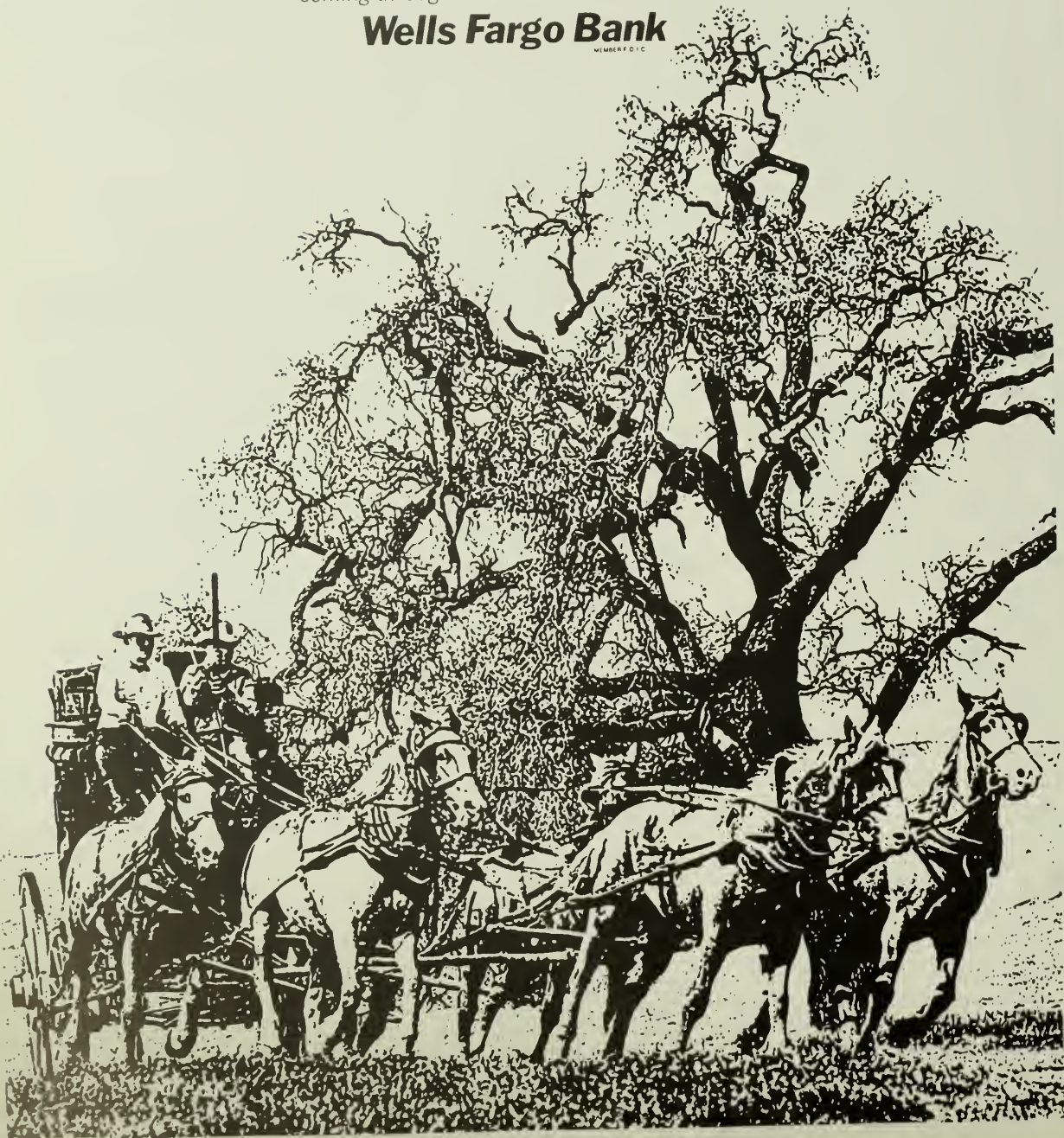
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# California History

---

VOLUME LX 1981

## Contents

California Historical Society  
SAN FRANCISCO • SAN MARINO • LOS ANGELES



The Distant Pawn of Empire 6

by John Caughey

The Long Black Line by Mary Jane Hewitt 12

Daughters of the Queen by Frances Ring 18

The Once and Future Majority by Antonio Rios-Bustamante 24

The Midwesternization of a Cowtown 28

by Leonard Pitt

Down to the Sea in Lighters . . . Then Ships by T. H. Watkins 32

The Light and The Dark in Local Letters by Jay Martin 38

The Genie of Yang-Na by W. H. Hutchinson 46

The Laboratory of Marvels 50

by John D. Weaver

A Sky-Minded City by Bruce Henstell 58

Hollywood Parties: The Way it Was by Arthur Knight 64

The Architecture of the City Eclectic by Robert Winter 72

Problems and Promise in Tomorrowland 76

by Richard G. Lillard

The Environment of Movement by Joseph Giovannini 82

The Far East in the Far West by Don and Nadine Hata 90

Libels and Labels on the Protean City . . . One Man's Riposte 98

by Jack Smith

NUMBER 2—SUMMER 1981

San Francisco's Greek Colony:

Evolution of an Ethnic Community, 1890-1945 114

by George P. Daskarolis

Gold Rush Jail: The Prison Ship *Euphemia* 134

by James P. Delgado

Chinese in California's Fishing Industry, 1850-1941 142

by L. Eve Armentrout-Ma

Trenor Park: A New Englander in California 158

by Virginia Bell

Irish Republicanism vs. "Pure Americanism":

California's Reaction to Eamon De Valera's Visits 172

by Timothy J. Sarbaugh

Pages from the Past—Cheap Living in

Southern California 186

REVIEWS

The Kemble Collections 188

by Bruce L. Johnson

Book Reviews 194

Book Notices 200

California Check List 203

NUMBER 3—FALL 1981

Maritime Fiasco on the Northern California Coast 210

by Lynwood Carranco

Science and Caltech in the Turbulent Thirties 228

by Judith Goodstein

"Pop" Laval: San Joaquin Valley Photographer 244

by Richard Steven Street

James vs. Marinship:

Trouble on the New Black Frontier 262

by Charles Wollenberg

Edward D. Baker and

California's First Republican Campaign 280

by Ray R. Albin

REVIEWS

Portrait of the Golden State—

The California State Library's Photography Collection 290

by Gary F. Kurutz

Book Reviews 296

California Check List 300

NUMBER 4—WINTER 1981/82

The Black Press in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1856-1900 306

by J. William Snorgrass

Images of the California Landscape, 1850-1916, Highlighting  
the Collection of the California Historical Society 318

by Gerrie E. Kahn

"Your Picture Hangs in my Salon," The Letters of  
Gertrude Atherton to Ambrose Bierce 332

by Emily Leider

The Italians of San Francisco in 1865: G. B. Cerruti's  
Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 350

by Alessandro Baccari and Andrew M. Canepa with translation

by Olga Richardson

REVIEWS

The California Historical Society's Collection  
of Daguerreotypes 370

by Martha Kennedy

Book Reviews 376

In Memoriam 381

California Check List 382

Volume Contents 385

Volume Index 389





# California History

---

VOLUME LX 1981

## Index

Compiled by Thomas L. Scharf

California Historical Society  
SAN FRANCISCO • SAN MARINO • LOS ANGELES



- Adamic, Louis, 62, 67  
 Adams, Alvin, 162, 169  
 Adams, Ansel, 295  
 Adams, John Quincy, 23  
 Adams, Lieutenant A.B., 214  
 Adams, Mildred, 69  
 Adams & Co., 162, 163, 164  
 Adams Express Company, 162  
 AFL Metal Trades Council, 267  
 Ain, Gregory, 73  
 Alatorre, Richard, 25  
 Albert, Margo, 19  
 Albin, Ray R., "Edward D. Baker and California's First Republican Campaign," 280-289  
 Alden, James, 322  
 Aldrich, Lloyd, 80  
 Allen, Peter C., *Stanford, From the Foothills to the Bay*, rev., 296-297  
 Allensworth, Colonel Allen, 314  
 Alger, Horatio, 49  
*Alta California*, 138, 188, 190, 286  
 American Can, 117  
 American Commission on Irish Independence (AC on II), 177  
 American Cyanamid Chemical Corporation, 249, 254  
 American Free Press, 197  
 American G.I. Forum, 25  
 American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), 126, 128, 130  
*The American Labor Citizen*, 270  
 American Savings, 96  
 American West Publishing Company, 191  
*An Archeological and Restoration Study of Mission La Purisima Concepción*, by Fred C. Hageman, rev., 376-377  
 Ancarani, Raffaele, 353  
 Ancient Order of Hibernians, 174, 175, 177  
 Anderson, Carl, 235  
 Anderson, Edward, 270  
 Anderson, George, 271, 272  
 Anderson, J.M., 214  
 Anderson, John, 238  
 Anderson, Peter, 307, 308, 311  
 Angel, Dr. Peter (Angelopoulos), 128, 129  
 Andrew Foreman & Son, 190  
 Angelus Temple, 18  
 Ann-Margret, 64  
 Antipa, Nicholas, 121  
 Antonakopoulos, Michael, 123  
 Antonio, Fray, 8  
*Apollo*, 136, 140, 141  
 Apostolides, Dr. Emmanuel, 126  
 Araujo, Francisco, 21  
 Arbuckle, Roscoe (Fatty), 62  
 Archibald, Katherine, 266, 275, 276  
 "The Architecture of the City Eclectic," by Robert Winter, 72-73  
*The Argonaut*, 190  
 Argüello, Sergeant José Dario, 15  
 Armentrout-Ma, L. Eve, "Chinese in California's Fishing Industry, 1850-1941," 142-157  
 Arms and Mudd Laboratories of the Geological Sciences, 239  
 Army Corps of Engineers, 78, 249, 257  
 Arnold, Bion J., 67  
 Art, *see* "Images of the California Landscape, 1850-1916, Highlighting the Collection of the California Historical Society, Part I—Yosemite," 318-331  
 Arzaga, Manuel, 21  
 Arzner, Dorothy, 19  
 Asians in Los Angeles, *see* "The Far East in the Far West," 90-91  
 Associated British Societies of Los Angeles, 181  
 Atherton, Dominga De Goñi, 334, 336  
 Atherton, Frank, 342  
 Atherton, Gertrude, 332-349 *passim*  
 Atherton, Muriel, 334, 336, 346  
 Atlantic-Richfield, 88, 96  
 Aviation in Los Angeles, *see* "A Sky-Minded City," 58-59  
 Aviation Field, 57  
 Augustine, Father, 175  
 Ayres, Thomas, 319  
 Baccari, Alessandro and Canepa, Andrew M., "The Italians of San Francisco in 1865: G.B. Cerruti's Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," 350-369  
 Baedeker, 57  
 Baker, Edward D., 280-289 *passim*  
 Baker, Maud Davis, 18  
 Baker, Viroque, 18  
 Bancroft, Hubert Howe, 15, 16, 20, 21  
 Banham, Reyner, 105  
 Banning, Phineas, 32, 40  
 Baptist Ministerial Conference, 181  
 Barrilis, Count Diego, 351  
 Barton, Clara, 343  
 Battle of the Old Woman's Gun, 23  
 Battle of San Pascual, 23  
 Bay Area Metal Trades Council, 270  
 Beach, Frank L., rev. of Allen, *Stanford, From the Foothills to the Bay* and McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara, A History, 1851-1977*, 296-297  
 Beaudry, Prudent, 40  
 Beaumont, Gustave de, 68  
 Beavers, Louise, 74  
 Bechtel, Kenneth, 264  
 Bechtel Company, 264, 272, 276  
 Becket, Welton, 13  
 Bell, Horace, 23, 32, 34, 38  
 Belloc, Hilarie, 339  
 Bell, Philip A., 307, 308, 311  
 Bell, Virginia, "Trenor Park: A New Englander in California," 158-171  
 Benjamin, Robert Charles O'Harra, 312, 313  
 Benny, Jack, 81  
 Berri, Emanuel, 351  
 Berry, Joy, "California Check List," 203-205, 300-301, 382-383; rev. of Nelson-Rees, *Lillie May Nicholson 1884-1964: An Artist Rediscovered*, 196-198  
 Beveridge, Miss, 342  
 Beverly Hills, 61, 88  
 Beverly Hills Tennis Club, 99  
 Bierce, Ambrose, 320, 332-349 *passim*  
 Bierstadt, Albert, 320, 324  
 Biesta, Federico, 353  
 Biggs, Peter, 12  
 Billings, Frederick, 165, 166, 167  
 Blabon, I.H., 214  
 "The Black Press in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1856-1900," by J. William Snorgrass, 306-317  
 Blacks in Los Angeles, *see* "The Long Black Line," 12-13  
 Blake, Moffitt & Towne, 190  
 Blankfort, Michael, 39  
 Bliven, Bruce, 63, 67  
 Blowout of 1968, 25  
 Boeing Company, 58  
 Bogusch, Lieutenant Harry, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218, 222  
 Bonaventure Hotel, 88  
 "Book Notices," by Gary F. Kurutz, 200-202  
 Botella, Narciso, 21  
 Bowden, Dina Moore, *Junípero Serra in his Native Isle (1713-1749)*, rev., 376-377  
 Bowles, Henry Miller, *In Memoriam*, 381  
 Bowron, Fletcher, 79  
 Bradley, Tom, 13, 84, 85, 86  
 Brandes, Ray, rev. of Engstrand, *San Diego: California's Comerstone*, 195-196  
 Brannan, Sam, 136  
 Breeden, Frank, 223  
 Bridges, J.M., 314  
 The Broadway Department Store, 88  
 Broderick, David C., 291  
 Brown, Governor Edmund G., Sr., 81  
 Brown, James E., 311  
 Brown, Jerry, 101, 290  
 Brown, John Henry, 135  
 Bruce, Commander Frank, 221  
 Bryce, Lord, 68  
 Buchanan, James, 287  
 Buenaventura Mining Company, 353  
 Bukowski, Charles, 38  
 Bunker Hill, 87, 88  
 Bunker Hill Development Program, 80  
 Burke, Yvonne Braithwaite, 18  
 Burns, J.J., 213  
 Butler, Edward I., 272, 274  
 Byrne, John, 182, 183  
 Byrne, John, Jr., 182



- Cabot, Padre, 21  
 Cabrillo, Juan Rodriguez, 7, 9, 10, 32  
 Caen, Herb, 104  
 Cain, James M., 39  
 Caire, Justimen, 353, 356  
 California, 123  
 California Association of Nurserymen, 247  
 "California Check List," by Joy Berry, 203-205, 300-301, 382-383  
 California Department of Fish and Game, 154  
 "The California Historical Society's Collection of Daguerreotypes," by Martha Kennedy, 370-375  
 California Magazine, 319  
 "California on Wheels," 48  
 California State Library, *see* "Portrait of the Golden State—The California State Library's Photography Collection, 290-295  
 California Women's Savings and Loan, 19  
 Calkins, Elmo, 69  
 Cal State University Los Angeles, 95  
 Cal State University Northridge, 95  
 Caltech, 228-243 *passim*  
 Camp, William Martin, 140  
 Candia, Pedro de, 114  
 Canedo, Fr. Lino Gómez, rev. of Truman and Mathes, *Missions*, 194  
 Canepa, Andrew M. and Baccari, Alessandro, "The Italians of San Francisco in 1865: G. B. Cerruti's Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," 350-369  
 Caperton, William B., 222, 223  
 Caralambo, George, 115  
*The Cannel Mission, from Founding to Rebuilding*, by Sydney Temple, rev., 376-377  
 Carr, Alan, 64  
 Carr, Harry, 62  
 Carranco, Lynwood, "Maritime Fiasco on the Northern California Coast," 210-227  
 Carrillo, Joaquin, 34  
 Carter, William H., 308  
 Castillo, Richard Griswold del, rev. of Naylor, *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide*, 377-378  
 Castro, Sal, 25  
 Caughey, John, "The Distant Pawn of Empire," 6-27  
 Cayton, Horace, 71  
 Central Pacific Railroad, 40  
 Central Wharf Association, 136  
 Century City, 92  
 Cerruti, G.B., 350-369 *passim*  
 Chamberlain, S.S., 338, 342, 343, 345  
 Chandler, Dorothy, 19, 95  
 Chandler, Harry, 54, 58, 69  
 Chandler, Raymond, 39, 107  
 Chaplin, Charles, 58, 61  
 Chaplin, Syd, 58  
 Charters, A.C., 214  
 Chavez Ravine, 81, 84  
 Chevigny, Hector, 114  
 Chicago World's Fair in 1893, 48  
 Chicano Moratorium, 25  
 China Mail Steamship Company, 152  
 "Chinese Bag Net," 144  
 "Chinese in California's Fishing Industry, 1850-1941," by L. Eve Armentrout-Ma, 142-157  
 "Chinese Massacre," 37, 40  
 Christian Science Monitor, 264, 266  
 Christopher, George, 118, 129, 130  
 C.H.S. Williams, Shafter and Park, 164  
 Chumash, 9  
 Chung Yen Hoy, 150  
 Cinel, Professor Dino, 351, 354  
 Clark, Donald, 241  
 Clarke, Judge Thurmond, 74  
 Cliff House, 246  
 Coate, Roland, Jr., 73  
 Cochi, Davide, 352  
 Cohen, Alfred, 162, 163, 164  
 Cohen, Frederick, 163  
 Cohocton Iron Works, 245  
 Coleman, William T., 291  
 Cole, Cornelius, 280, 281, 282, 283, 286, 288  
 Cole, Nat King, 92  
 Cole, Olive, 286, 287  
 Collins, A.A., 313  
 Colored American, 307  
 Community Service Organization (CSO), 25  
 Comstock, Sarah, 67  
 Cornel Adobe, 40  
 Corning Glass Works, 238  
 Costansó, 9  
 Cousins, Captain Henry, 223  
 Cousins Launch and Lighter Company, 223  
 Crago Franciscorum, 145  
 Crago Vulgaris, 145  
 Creel, George, 69  
 Crellin Laboratory, 239  
 Crisis, 267  
 Crocker, Charles, 40, 41  
 Crocker, C. Templeton, 193  
 Crocker, Jennie, 246  
 Crum, Bartley, 271  
 Crump, Spencer, 55  
 Curtis, Edward S., 295  
 Curtiss, Glenn, 57, 58  
 CYANOGAS, 257  
 Daniels, Douglas, 278  
 Danziger, Dr. Adolphe, 340, 342  
 Daskarolis, George P., "San Francisco's Greek Colony: Evolution of an Ethnic Community, 1890-1945," 114-133  
 Daskarolis, Nick, 118  
 Daughters of Penelope, 126, 127  
 "Daughters of the Queen," by Frances Ring, 18-19  
 Davidson, Benjamin, 354, 356  
 Davidson, J.R., 73  
 Davis, Ed, 93, 101  
 Davis, Grace Montañez, 25  
 Davis, William Heath, 136, 137, 138  
 Day, Clinton, 158  
 Decker, T.S., 222  
 Delarof, Evstrat, 114  
 De Lesseps Panama Canal Company, 169  
 Delgado, James P., "Gold Rush Jail: The Prison Ship *Euphemia*," 134-141  
 Dellums, C.L., 266, 269, 272  
 DeMille, Cecil B., 58, 64, 99  
 Demke, Lieutenant E.F., 212, 223  
 Dempster, Miles C., 264  
 Denevi, Don and Saul, Eric, *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906*, rev., 378-379  
 Derrah, Robert V., 72  
 Derus, David, rev. of Ferlinghetti and Peters, *Literary San Francisco; a Pictorial History from Its Beginnings to the Present Day, 194-195*  
 De Soto, 11  
 Diaper and Dudley, 158  
 Dickinson, Roscoe, 241  
 Didion, Joan, 19, 82  
 Didion, John, 39  
 Dillon, Patrice Guillaume, 354  
 Dinsmore, William, 169  
 Disney, Walt, 106  
 Disneyland, 96  
 "The Distant Pawn of Empire," by John Caughey, 6-27  
 Dobbin, Hamilton B., 293  
 Dodgers, 81  
 Dodger Stadium, 81  
 Doheny, Edward, 43, 46  
 D'Oliveira, Emanuel, 357  
 Dominguez Hills, 58  
 Dominguez Ranch, 57  
 Dondero, Carlo, 353  
 Donnelly, William, 225  
 Dooner, P.W., 38  
 Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 95  
 Douglas, Donald, 58, 59  
 Douglass, Frederick, 311  
 Doukas, Nick, 121  
 Downey, John G., 40  
 "Down to the Sea in Lighters . . . Then Ships," by T.H. Watkins, 32-33  
 Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, 62  
 Drum Barracks, 34  
 Dwiggins, William Addison, 190

- Eaton, Fred, 54  
 Ebert, Roger, 65  
 Echo Park Lake, 43  
 "Edward D. Baker and California's First Republican Campaign," by Ray R. Albin, 280-289  
 Egly, Judge Paul, 94  
 Einstein, Albert, 229, 230, 232, 233, 234, 235  
*El Clamor Público*, 34  
*Elevator*, 308, 311, 312, 313  
 Elkus, Richard J., 295  
 Ellery, Epes, 190  
 Elliott, James Welsh, 191  
 Ellison, Captain Lawrence, 213, 214, 216, 220, 222, 225  
 Elysian Park, 81  
 Emmet, Robert, 175  
 Empire Gold & Silver Mining, 169  
 Engstrand, Iris H.W., *San Diego: California's Cornerstone*, rev., 195-196  
 "The Environment of Movement," by Joseph Giovannini, 82-83  
*Euphemia*, see "Gold Rush Jail: The Prison Ship *Euphemia*," 134-141
- Falkirk*, 158, 170  
 Fairbanks, Douglas, 61, 63  
 Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), 272, 274, 276  
 "The Far East in the Far West," by Don and Nadine Hata, 90-91  
 Faulkner & Son, 191  
 Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, 139  
 Fellita, Frank de, 65  
 Felix, Domingo, 21  
 Ferlinghetti, Lawrence and Peters, Nancy J., *Literary San Francisco; a Pictorial History from Its Beginnings to the Present Day*, rev., 194-195  
 Fessenden, Charles P., 292  
 Figueroa, José, 21  
 Fillmore District (San Francisco), 266, 271, 277  
 First A.M.E. Church, 12  
 First Colored Convention of California, 306  
 First Women's Bank of California, 19  
 Fishermen's Union, 115  
 Fishing, see "Chinese in California's Fishing Industry, 1850-1941," 142-157  
 Fitch, George, 183  
 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, 39  
 Flint, Wilson, 284  
 Flood, Judge Bernard, 179  
 Flynn, Errol, 64  
 Folsom Prison, 312  
 Fonda, Jane, 18  
 Foreign Miners Tax of 1854, 143  
 Forkner, J.C., 246
- Forrest Theater, 286  
 Fort Ross, 343, 344, 346  
 Fort Tejon, 37  
 Fort Yuma, 34  
 Foster, Mayor Stephen C., 31  
 Fotenos Brothers, 118  
 Foulerton, William A., 311  
 Francis, Joseph S., 313, 314  
 Franklin, Stephen, 334, 344  
 Fraser, James, 223  
 "Free Harbor Jubilee," 48  
 Freeman, Emma, 293, 295  
 Frémont, John C., 23, 100, 165, 166, 282, 283, 286, 287  
 French Hospital, 353  
 French Mutual Benefit Society, 353, 357  
 French Savings and Loan Society, 352, 353, 354  
*Fresno Bee*, 257  
 Fresno Chamber of Commerce, 249, 254  
*Fresno Guide*, 258  
*Fresno Republican*, 246, 254  
 Friend, Henry, 38  
 Friends of Irish Freedom, 174, 175, 177, 181, 182, 183  
 Friends of the Kemble Collections, 193  
 Frye, Senator William B., 32  
 Fuca, Juan de, 114  
 Fullam, Admiral, 223
- Gabrielino, 9, 10, 16, 37  
 Gallagher, Andrew J., 175, 177, 179  
 Gallagher, Martin, 175  
 Gallagher, Pat, 212  
 Gálvez, Bernardo de, 14  
 Gálvez, José de, 14  
 Gant, Michael S., *Santa Cruz, The Early Years, The Collected Historical Writings of Leon Rowland*, rev., 199  
 Garvey, Marcus, 314  
 Gary, Romain, 105  
 Gehry, Frank, 73  
 General Electric Company, 238  
 "The Genie of Yang-Na," by W.H. Hutchinson, 46-47  
 Genthe, Arnold, 293  
 George, David Lloyd, 173  
 Ghirardelli, Domenico, 353  
*Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains*, by John V. Young, rev., 199  
 Gibbs, Mifflin W., 306  
 Gibson, Phil, 274, 275  
 Gifford, Thomas, 103  
 Gilliam, Ann, *Voices for the Earth: A Treasury of the Sierra Club Bulletin*, rev., 299  
 Giovannini, Joseph, "The Environment of Movement," 82-83  
 Gitelson, Judge Alfred, 94  
 Gleason, John B., rev. of Gilliam, *Voices for the Earth: A Treasury of the Sierra Club Bulletin*, 299
- for the Earth: A Treasury of the Sierra Club Bulletin*, 299  
 Golden Brand Bottling Company, 118  
*Golden Gate*, 161  
 Golden Gate International Exposition, 257  
 Golden West Bakery, 118  
 Gold Rush, 30, 31  
 "Gold Rush Jail: The Prison Ship *Euphemia*," by James P. Delgado, 134-141  
 Goodstein, Judith, "Science and Caltech in the Turbulent Thirties," 288-243  
 Graham, Nina, 212  
 Granger, Lester, 266, 277  
 Grant, Louis T., 179  
 Grauman, Sid, 63  
 Grauman's Chinese Theater, 104  
 Greater Los Angeles Rubbish Council, 80-81  
*The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906*, by Eric Saul and Don Denevi, rev., 378-379  
 Great Western Savings, 96  
 Greek-American League, 127, 128  
 Greek Ladies Brotherhood Progress, 126, 127  
 Greek Memorial Park, 121  
 Greek Theater, 80  
 Greek War Relief Association, 130  
 Greeks in San Francisco, see "San Francisco's Greek Colony: Evolution of an Ethnic Community, 1890-1945," 114-133  
 Green Gulch Mill, 166  
 Green, William, 274  
 Griego, Juan, 114  
 Griffith, D.W., 60  
 Griffith Park, 84  
 Gruen, Victor, 87  
 Guilini, Carlo Maria, 95  
 Gutenberg, Beno, 234
- Hacienda Village, 13  
 Hageman, Fred C., *An Archeological and Restoration Study of Mission La Purísima Concepción*, rev., 376-377  
 Hahn, William, 326  
 Haislip, Lieutenant Harvey, 214, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222  
 Hale, George Ellery, 230, 232, 233, 237, 238, 239  
 Halleck, Henry, 165  
 Hall, Hiland, 160, 161  
 Halleck, Peach and Billings, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165  
 Hamilton, Ned, 342  
 Hammond Lumber Company, 212, 213, 220, 222  
 Harbor at Los Angeles, see "Down to the Sea in Lighters . . . Then Ships," 32-33  
 Harding, Mrs. Dorothea Huggins, 193

- Harding, George Laban, 188, 190, 191, 193
- Harpending, Lucille and Genevieve, 123
- Harriman, F.H., 55
- Hart, Jerome Alfred, 190
- Hata, Don and Nadine, "The Far East in the Far West," 90-91
- Hawks, Nelson Crocker, 190
- Haves, Judge Benjamin, 12
- Hays, Will, 62
- Hearst, William Randolph, 69, 343
- Hefner, Hugh, 64
- Helleme Mutual Benevolent Society, 126
- Hellman, Isaias W., 40
- Henry Skinner and Company, 137
- Hensel, Robert, 212
- Henstell, Bruce, "A Sky-Minded City," 58-59
- Hendon, Booton, 61
- Hewitt, Mary Jane, "The Long Black Line," 12-13
- Hibben, Lita Belle, 18
- Hibernian Savings, 179
- Higgins, Barney, J., 179
- Hill, Thomas, 328
- Hogan, Elodie, 339, 342, 348
- Hollywood Bowl, 80, 95
- "Hollywood Parties: The Way It Was," by Arthur Knight, 64-65
- Home Savings, 96
- Hopkins, Mark, 40
- Horan, P.T., 176, 180, 183
- Horsley, David, 60
- "Hounds," 135
- Houston, Norman, 74
- Howe, Commander W.B., 211, 213, 214, 216, 225, 226
- Howells, William Dean, 345
- Howland, F., 44
- Hubble, Edwin, 233
- Huggins, Nathan I., 262, 278
- Hughes, Howard, 81
- Humboldt Bay, 211-226 *passim*
- Humboldt Bay Maritime Association, 226
- Humboldt Standard, 223
- Humboldt Stevedore Company, 223
- Hunt, Haywood H., 188, 191
- Huntington, Collis P., 32, 33, 40, 48
- Huntington, Henry E., 55, 57, 63
- Huret, Jules, 57
- Hutchings, James Mason, 319, 320
- Hutchinson, W.H., "The Genie of Yang-Na," 46-47
- Hylen, Arnold, 295
- Illinois*, 161
- "Images of the California Landscape, 1850-1916, Highlighting the Collection of the California Historical Society, Part I—Yosemite," by Gerrie E. Kahn, 318-331
- In Memoriam*: Henry Miller Bowles, 381
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, 267, 269, 272, 274, 276
- "Irish Republicanism vs. 'Pure Americanism': California's Reaction to Eamon De Valera's Visits," by Timothy J. Sarbaugh, 172-185
- Irish Victory Fund, 177
- Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers of America, 267
- Iroquois*, 214, 216, 217, 220, 221, 225
- Italian Mutual Benefit Society, 352, 353, 354, 357, 359
- "The Italians of San Francisco in 1865: G. B. Cerruti's Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," by Alessandro Baccari and Andrew M. Canepa, 350-369
- Jackson, Helen Hunt, 19
- James, Henry, 52, 54, 55
- James, Joseph, 269, 270, 271, 272, 275, 276, 277
- "James vs. Marinship: Trouble on the New Black Frontier," by Charles Wollenberg, 262-279
- Janigian, Charles, 271
- Jarvis, Howard, 86
- Jefferson, Thomas, 23
- Jeffers, Robinson, 38
- Johnson, Charles Wallace Jacob, 292, 293
- Johnson, Bruce L., "The Kemble Collections," 188-193
- Johnson, Clarence "Kelly," 58
- Johnson, Rt. Rev. Joseph H., 181
- Johnson, Paul C., 320
- Johnston, Bernice Eastman, 10
- Johnston, R.W., 245
- Jones, Idwall, 165
- Jones, John P., 40
- Julian, Richard J., 295
- Junipero Serra in his Native Isle (1713-1749)*, by Dina Moore Bowden, rev., 376-377
- Kael, Pauline, 100
- Kahn, Gerrie E., "Images of the California Landscape, 1850-1916, Highlighting the Collection of the California Historical Society, Part I—Yosemite," 318-331
- Kaiser Ship Yard, 263, 264, 266, 267, 272, 276
- Kearny, Stephen Watts, 23
- Keating, Thomas, 176
- Kemble, Edward Cleveland, 188
- "The Kemble Collections," by Bruce L. Johnson, 188-193
- The Kemble Occasional*, 193
- Kennedy, Adam, 103
- Kennedy, Martha, "The California Historical Society's Collection of Daguerreotypes," 370-375; rev. of Palmquist, *Lawrence & Houseworth/Thomas Houseworth Co., A Unique View of the West, 1860-1886*, 297-299
- Kenny, Robert, 270
- Kerekhoff Laboratory, 239
- Kessler, Jascha, 39
- King Constantine II, 120
- King, James, 163
- King of the Missions, A Documentary History of San Luis Rey de Francia*, by Francis J. Weber, rev., 376-377
- Kings River Canyon, 254
- Kitt, Eartha, 81
- Knight, Arthur, "Hollywood Parties: The Way It Was," 64-65
- Know-Nothing Party, 280, 283, 287, 288
- Kockos Brothers, 119
- Kosta, Alexander, 119
- Kovrigin, Father, 119
- Kroeber, A.L., 10
- Kurutz, Gary F., "Book Notices," 200-202; "Portrait of the Golden State—The California State Library's Photography Collection," 290-295
- "The Laboratory of Marvels," by John D. Weaver, 50-75
- Labor Citizen*, 271
- La Crónica*, 354
- Lanc, C. Chester, 190
- Land, Admiral Emory S., 270
- Lange, Oscar V., 292
- La Raza Unida, 25
- Larco, Nicola (Nicholas), 352, 353, 354, 356, 359
- Larkin, Thomas O., 22
- Las Mariposa, 165, 166, 167, 169
- Lastreto, Luigi, 359
- Laval, Claude Jr., 254
- Laval, Jerome, 259
- Laval, "Pop," 244-261 *passim*
- Laval, Sadie, 245, 258
- Laval Studios, 249
- Lavelle, Frank, 222
- Lawlor, Oscar, 181
- Lawrence & Houseworth/Thomas Houseworth Co., A Unique View of the West, 1860-1886*, by Peter E. Palmquist, rev., 297-299
- The Leader*, 175
- Leider, Emily, "'Your picture hangs in my salon,' The Letters of Gertrude Atherton to Ambrose Bierce," 332-349
- Lee, Rev. Baker E., 38
- Le Gallienne, Richard, 348
- Le Phare*, 354



- Lewin, Virginia B., *One of Benny's Faces: A Study of Beniamino Bufano, 1886-1970, The Man Behind The Artist*, rev., 198-199
- "Libels and Labels on the Protean City . . . One Man's Riposte," by Jack Smith, 98-107
- "The Light and The Dark in Local Letters," by Jan Martin, 38-39
- Lillard, Richard G., "Problems and Promise in Tomorrowland," 76-97
- Lillie May Nicholson 1884-1964: An Artist Rediscovered*, by Walter A. Nelson-Rees, rev., 196-198
- Lincoln, Abraham, 319
- Lincoln, Charles, 161, 164, 165, 167, 169
- Literary San Francisco: a Pictorial History from Its Beginnings to the Present Day*, by Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters, rev., 194-195
- Literature in Los Angeles, see "The Light and Dark in Local Letters," 38-39
- Liu Hsing, 152
- Lloyd, Harold, 61, 64
- Lockheed, 58, 59
- Lokis, Father Basil, 120
- "The Long Black Line," by Mary Jane Hewitt, 12-13
- Lortie, Francis N., Jr., 312
- Los Angeles, see special issue, Spring 1-112 *passim*
- Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 55
- Los Angeles City College, 94
- Los Angeles City Field, 46
- Los Angeles City Hall, 79, 84, 104
- Los Angeles' Civic Center, 88
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 95
- Los Angeles Evening Herald*, 182
- Los Angeles International Airport, 79, 80
- Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies*, 42
- Los Angeles & Pasadena Railroad, 55
- Los Angeles Railway Company, 55
- Los Angeles Times*, 32, 40, 42, 48, 51, 52, 57, 60, 62, 85, 96, 180, 181, 182, 183
- Los Angeles Unified School District, 79
- Loutas, Anna Milonas, 124
- Love, Eulia, 94
- Loverci, Professor Francesca, 351
- Loy, William Edward, 188
- Luna Visitor*, 307
- Lupino, Ida, 19
- McCullough, 214, 217
- McCullough, John G., 170
- McCurry, Harold J., 293
- McCoy, Horace, 39
- McDaniel, Hattie, 74
- McDonald, Calvin, 285
- McDougal, James, 161
- McGloin, John B., S.J., rev. of Ross, *San Francisco, 75th Anniversary, Special Souvenir Edition, 1906-1981* and Saul and Denevi, *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906*, 378-379
- McKevitt, Gerald, *The University of Santa Clara, A History 1851-1977*, rev., 296-297
- McKinley, William, 314
- McNeil and Libby, 248
- McPherson, Aimee Semple, 18, 62, 68, 69, 101
- McWilliams, Carey, 32, 49, 67, 68, 74
- MacArthur, Walter, 140
- MacGowan, Charles, 274
- Mahé, Gustave, 353
- Mailer, Norman, 39
- Makaronis, Reverend, 119
- Maloney, Tom, 129
- Mangini, Angelo, 353
- Mann, Thomas, 39, 75
- Marcosson, Isaac, 55
- Marin Citizen*, 264, 275
- Marin County Housing Authority, 264
- Marin County's China Camp, 145
- Marin-er*, 269
- Marinship, 262-279 *passim*
- Mariposa Big Tree Grove, 319, 320
- Mariposa Gazette*, 319
- Mariposa Mining Company, 167
- "Maritime Fiasco on the Northern California Coast," by Lynwood Carranco, 210-227
- Market Street Cable Railway, 55
- Marshall, E., 314
- Marshall, Thurgood, 271
- Marsh, John, 22
- Martin, J. Stella, 308
- Martínez, José Longinos, 16
- Martin, Glenn, 58
- Martin, Jay, "The Light and The Dark in Local Letters," 38-39
- Marysville Express*, 284
- Mason, Biddy, 12, 18
- Mathes, W. Michael, rev. of Bowden, *Junipero Serra in his Native Isle (1713-1749)*; Hageman, *An Archeological and Restoration Study of Mission La Purísima Concepción*; Temple, *The Camel Mission, from Founding to Rebuilding*; Tutarow, *The Mexican-American War: An Annotated Bibliography*; and Weber, *King of the Missions, A Documentary History of San Luis Rey de Francia and The Pronto Mission, A Documentary History of San Diego de Alcalá*, 376-377, 379
- Mathis, Johnny, 92
- Mayer, Louis B., 69
- Mehta, Zubin, 95
- Meir, Frederick H., 293
- Mencken, H.L., 101
- Mercer-Fraser Construction Company, 216, 223, 225
- Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, 56
- Merkey, Esther, 213
- Metaxas, General John, 130
- Mexican-American War, 29
- The Mexican-American War: An Annotated Bibliography*, compiled and edited by Norman E. Tutarow, rev., 379-380
- Mexicans in Los Angeles, see "The Once and Future Majority," 24-25
- Mexican Revolution of 1822, 32
- "The Midwesternization of a Cowtown," by Leonard Pitt, 28-49
- Milestone, Lewis, 64
- Millard, Charles Dwight, 31
- Miller, Henry, 39
- Miller, Joaquin, 336
- Miller, Loren, 74
- Millikan, Robert A., 228-243 *passim*
- Mirror of the Times*, 306, 307
- Missions*, by Stanley Truman with text by W. Michael Mathes, rev., 194
- Mission San Antonio, 14
- Mission San Buenaventura, 16
- Mission San Fernando, 16, 37
- Mission San Francisco, 14
- Mission San Gabriel, 14, 15, 16, 37
- Mission San Juan Capistrano, 14
- Mission San Luis Obispo, 14
- Mission Santa Clara, 14
- Mix, Tom, 61
- Mocambo, 81
- Molaikides Brothers, 118
- Monroe, Marilyn, 18
- Montgomery Block, 165
- Moore Company, 266
- Moore, Brian, 39
- Moore, Charles, 73
- Moore, John J., 307
- Morgan, E.D., 281
- Morgan, Walls and Clements, 72
- Morris, Jan, 106
- Mountanos, Anastasios, 123
- Mount Lowe, 53
- Mt. Wilson Observatory, 230, 233, 235, 237
- Muir, John, 319, 320
- Mulholland, William, 54, 71
- Municipal Art Commission, 57
- Murphy, Dave, 175
- Muybridge, Eadweard, 291, 292
- Nadeau, Remi, 32
- Nash, John Henry, 193
- Nathan, Robert, 39
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), 267, 269, 271
- National Chicano Moratorium, 25
- Nava, Gregory, 65

- Naylor, Thomas H., *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide*, rev., 377-378
- Nelson, Jessie Elwin, 18
- Nelson-Rees, Walter A., Lillie May  
*Nicholson 1884-1964: An Artist Rediscovered*, rev., 196-198
- Nestor Film Company, 60
- Neutra, Richard, 13, 73
- Neve, Governor Felipe de, 14, 15
- New Era Park, 222
- Newmark, Harris, 49
- Newspapers, see "The Black Press in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1856-1900," 306-317
- Newton, F.W., 211, 214, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 226
- Niantu, 136, 141
- Nichols, Ella C., 169, 170
- Nidever, George, 10
- Nieto, Manuel, 16
- "Nigger Alley," 31
- Ninnis, F.C., 249
- Noble, "Cosey," 342
- Nordhoff, Charles, 42
- Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics, 230
- North American Aircraft, 58
- Northern New Spain: A Research Guide*, by Thomas H. Naylor, rev., 377-378
- Northrup, John, 58
- Northrup Company, 58
- Noyes, Arthur Amos, 230, 232, 237, 239, 241
- Nutting, D.C., 223
- Oakie, Jack, 64
- Oakland Sunshine*, 314, 317
- Oakland Tribune*, 223
- Occidental Oil Company, 96
- O *Eirínikos*, 123
- Old Gaumont Weekly, 249
- "Old Mossie," 230, 232
- Olympic Games (Los Angeles), 86
- O'Malley, Walter, 81
- O'Mara, James, 177
- O'Meara & Painter, 190
- O'Melveny, H.K.S., 40
- "The Once and Future Majority," by Antonio Rios-Bustamente, 24-25
- One of Benny's Faces: A Study of Beniamino Bufano, 1886-1970, The Man Behind The Artist*, by Virginia B. Lewin, rev., 198-199
- Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 229
- Order of Klossa, 127, 128
- Ord, Lieutenant E.O.C., 30
- Orleans Hotel, 283, 286
- Otis, Harrison Gray, 32, 40, 48, 51, 54, 60, 181
- Owens, Robert, 12
- Owens Valley Aqueduct, 54, 70
- Pacific Appeal*, 307, 308, 311
- Pacific Coast Women's Press Association, 336
- Pacific Design Center, 72, 73
- Pacific Electric, 82
- Pacific Electric Railway Company, 55
- Pacific Mail Steamship Company, 152, 169
- Pacific Power & Light, 55
- Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, 190
- Pacific Type Foundry, 190, 191
- "Pages from the past—Cheap Living in Southern California," 186-187
- Painter & Company, 191
- Palmer, Joseph, 164
- Palmer, Cook & Co., 164
- Palmer & Rey, 191
- Palmerston, Colin, 38
- Palmquist, Peter E., *Lawrence & Houseworth/Thomas Houseworth Co., A Unique View of the West, 1860-1886*, rev., 297-299
- Palomar Mountain, 238
- Panama-California Exposition, 247
- Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915, 123, 247
- Panama Railroad, 169
- Panvoikos Society, 126
- Papageorgopoulos, Kallistos, 120
- Pappageorge-Palladius, George, 123
- Park, Calvin, 167
- Park, Eliza, 161, 167, 169, 170
- Park, Laura, 161, 167, 169
- Park, Trenor, 158-171 *passim*
- Parker, H.F., 220
- Park-McCullough House, 158, 169
- Parrott, John, 166, 167
- Pasadena Freeway, 82
- Patterson, J. Arthur, 179
- Paulhan, Louis, 57
- Pauling, Linus, 239
- Pavellas, Alexander K., 123
- Pavellas, Constantinos, 123
- Peachy, A.C., 163
- Pearse, Patrick, 172
- Pease, Francis G., 237, 238
- Peed, W.W., 214
- Pegler, Westbrook, 69, 101
- Pelli, Cesar, 72
- Pendergast, Mrs. W.W., 292
- People's World*, 275
- Persons, Charles R., 313
- Petroleum in Los Angeles, see "The Genie of Yang-Na," 46-47
- Peters, Jock, 73
- Peterson, Curtis, 212
- Peterson, George C., 128
- Peterson-Cherakis, George, 127, 128
- Petterson, Captain, 212
- Phelan, Senator James, 176
- Photography, see "The California Historical Society's Collection of Daguerreotypes," 370-375; "Portrait of the Golden State—The California State Library's Photography Collection," 290-295; and "Pop Laval: San Joaquin Valley Photographer," 244-261
- Pickford, Mary, 18, 60, 61, 63, 64
- Pico, Pío, 34, 40
- Pico House, 34
- Pierce, Franklin, 34
- Pitt, Leonard, "The Midwesternization of a Cowtown," 28-49
- Pizarro, Francisco, 114
- Placer Times*, 188
- Platin-Moretus Museum, 191
- Polk, James K., 22, 23
- Polytechnic High School, 85
- Ponicsan, Daryl, 39
- "Pop" Laval: San Joaquin Valley Photographer," by Richard Steven Street, 244-261
- Porciúncula River, 37
- Porter, Russell, W., 238
- Portman, John, 88
- Portolá, Gaspar de, 8, 9, 10, 14
- "Portrait of the Golden State—The California State Library's Photography Collection," by Gary F. Kurutz, 290-295
- Post, Gabriel, 136
- Post, Robert C., 67
- Poulopoulos, Angelo and Athanasia, 121
- Poulson, Norris, 79, 80, 81, 86
- Powell, Lawrence Clark, 39
- Powell, R.V., 249
- Pratt, Walter, 213
- "Problems and Promise in Tomorrowland," by Richard G. Lillard, 76-97
- Prometheus*, 123
- The Pronto Mission, A Documentary History of San Diego de Alcalá*, by Francis J. Weber, rev., 376-377
- Prudon, Victor, 21
- Pueblo*, 223
- Pueblo de las Canoas, 7, 8
- Pynchon, Thomas, 39
- Quan, Frank, 144, 145
- Queen Mary*, 72, 104
- Rainbow, Ed, 271
- Ramírez, Francisco, 34
- Ranchería de Corral, 9
- Randolph, A. Philip, 272
- Rathbone, Basil, 64
- Rawlings, J.B., 179
- Record, Cy, 276
- Reddin, Thomas, 85
- Reid, Hugo, 9, 21
- Relief*, 212, 213, 216

- Republican Party, *see* "Edward D. Baker and California's First Republican Campaign," 280-289  
 Ressler, Herbert, 271  
 Richter, Charles, 234  
 Ring, Frances, "Daughters of the Queen," 18-19  
 Rios-Bustamante, Antonio, "The Once and Future Majority," 24-25  
 Rivera, Captain Fernando, 14-15  
 Rivers and Harbors Bill of 1896, 33  
 Robbins, Alan, 86  
 Robinson, W.W., 16  
 Roche, Michael, 271  
 Rockefeller Foundation, 237, 238  
 Roeding, George C., 247  
 Rogers, Buddy, 64  
 Rogers, Will, 61, 101, 232  
 Rolle, Andrew, 95  
 Rolph, James, Jr., 128, 175, 176, 177  
 Rooney, Mickey, 75  
 Roosevelt, Franklin, 272, 274  
 Roosevelt, James, 84  
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 314  
 "Roseville," 147  
 Rose, Wickliffe, 237  
 Ross, Malcolm, 272, 274, 276  
 Ross, Ron *San Francisco, 75th Anniversary, Special Souvenir Edition, 1906-1981*, rev., 378-379  
 Roth, G.B., 218  
 Rowan, Jan, 107  
 Rowell, Chester, 245-246  
 Royko, Mike, 101  
 Rulofson, William Herman, 291  
 Russell, Bertrand, 69  
 Russell, Carl P., 319  
 Russom, Thomas, 137  
  
 Sackrider, Henry, 293  
*Sacramento Bee*, 176  
*Sacramento Daily Union*, 188, 281  
*Sacramento Journal*, 283  
 St. Alexander Nevsky, 119  
 St. Francis Hotel, 175, 176  
 St. Sure, Judge Paul, 271  
 Salazar, Ruben, 25, 85  
 Salvador, Ludwig, 34, 41, 42  
 Samson Tyre and Rubber Company, 72  
 Sam Yip Association, 150  
 Sanchez, Thomas, 39  
 San Diego, 147, 148  
*San Diego*, 222  
*San Diego: California's Cornerstone*, by Iris H.W. Engstrand, rev., 195-196  
 San Diego Presidio, 16  
 San Fernando Valley, 93  
 San Francisco and Pacific Glass Works, 117  
*San Francisco Argonaut*, 334  
*San Francisco Chronicle*, 140, 179, 275  
 San Francisco Committee Against Segregation and Discrimination, 269  
*San Francisco Examiner*, 129, 179, 270, 338, 342, 343  
*San Francisco Monitor*, 176, 180  
*San Francisco Sentinel*, 312, 313  
*San Francisco, 75th Anniversary, Special Souvenir Edition, 1906-1981*, by Ron Ross, rev., 378-379  
 "San Francisco's Greek Colony: Evolution of an Ethnic Community, 1890-1945," by George P. Daskarolis, 114-133  
 San Francisco's Lincoln Shrimp, 152  
 San Joaquin Light and Power, 254, 257  
*San Jose Tribune*, 285  
 San Pedro Port, 32, 48  
 San Rafael Daily Independent, 270, 271  
 Santa Barbara Presidio, 15, 16  
*Santa Cruz, The Early Years, The Collected Historical Writings of Leon Rowland*, by Michael S. Gant, rev., 199  
 Santa Fe Railway, 46  
 Santa María, Fray Vicente, 16  
 Santa Monica Mountains, 87  
 Sarantis Brothers, 118  
 Sarbaugh, Timothy J., "Irish Republicanism vs. 'Pure Americanism': California's Reaction to Eamon De Valera's Visits," 172-185  
 Saul, Eric and Denevi, Don, *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906*, rev., 378-379  
 Savage, Major James, D., 319  
 Schiesl, Martin, 87  
 Schindler, R.M., 73  
 Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr., 69  
 Schneider Aero Service, 257  
 Schneider, Jack, 257  
 Schrecker, Paul, 71  
 "Science and Caltech in the Turbulent Thirties," by Judith Goodstein, 228-243  
 Scott, Joseph, 181, 182, 183  
 Security Pacific Bank, 88, 96, 97  
 Selvage, Walter S., 223  
 Selvage Construction Company, 223  
 Sepulveda, Judge, 40  
 Sequoia Yacht Club, 222  
 Serra, Father, 16  
 Seven Years War, 14  
 Seward, William H., 280, 282  
 Shafter, Heydenfeldt and Park, 164  
 Shafter, Oscar Lovell, 164, 165, 167, 169  
 Shaler, William, 16  
*Shelley vs. Kraemer*, 74  
 Sherman, General Moses H., 54, 55  
 Shipyard Laborers Union, 267  
 Short, Bobby, 64  
 Shoshoneans, 10  
 Shuler, Reverend Robert, 62  
 Simon, Neil, 99, 101  
 Sims, Admiral William, 180  
 Sinclair, Upton, 68, 69  
 "A Sky-Minded City," by Bruce Henstell, 58-59  
 Sleeping Car Porters Union, 266, 272  
 Sloat, Commodore John D., 22, 26  
 Small, Eugene, 270, 271  
 Smith, Dr. A.C., 181  
 Smith, Jack, "Libels and Labels on the Protean City . . . One Man's Riposte," 98-107  
 Smith, Roger, 64  
 Smith, William, 274  
 Snorgrass, J. William, "The Black Press in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1856-1900," 306-317  
 Snyder, Mayor Meredith P., 181  
 Society of California Pioneers, 359  
 Somers, Fred, 334  
 Somerville, Dr. J.A., 74  
 Somerville, Dr. Vada, 74  
 Sonenfeld, Alexandra Apostolides, 126  
 Sonin, Hille, rev. of Lewin, *One of Benny's Faces: A Study of Beniamino Bufano, 1886-1970, The Man Behind The Artist, 198-199*  
 Sonora Town, 34  
 Soriano, Raphael, 73  
 Southern California Edison, 254  
 Southern Pacific Railroad, 32, 33, 41, 48  
 South of Market, 114, 117  
 Southwestern Law School, 85  
 "Spartacus," 127  
 Speed, J.G., 52  
 Spiegel, Sam, 64  
 Splivalo, Augusto, B., 353  
 Stallinger, Preston, 270  
 Stanford, Leland, 32, 40  
*Stanford, From the Foothills to the Bay*, by Peter C. Allen, rev., 296-297  
 Starkweather, John B., 290, 291  
 Stearns, Abel, 21, 30  
 Stein, Gertrude, 104  
 Stellman, Louis J., 293, 295  
 Stewart, Ray, 272  
 Stockton, Robert F., 22, 23, 26, 100  
 Stoddart, Joseph, 345  
 Stokes, Mr., 342  
 Stokes, Willie, 276, 277  
 Street, Richard Steven, "Pop" Laval: San Joaquin Valley Photographer," 244-261  
 Summers, Emma, 18  
*Sunset Magazine*, 57  
*Sunset Strip*, 86  
*Surprise*, 148  
 Sutter's Mill, 23  
 Swanson, Gloria, 61  
 Sweins, Werner, 213, 225  
 Symes, Lillian, 68  
 Taber, I.W., 292



- Tatt, President, 57  
 Tamaras, Peter, 125  
 Tamaras, William and Melba, 125  
 Taylor & Taylor, 188, 191  
 Temple, John, 21, 30  
 Temple, Sydney, *The Carmel Mission, from Founding to Rebuilding*, rev., 376-377  
 Testimony and Witness Laws of California, 307, 308  
 Thanos, A.K., 118  
 Thomas, Ann, 65  
 Thomson, Elihu, 238  
 Throop, Amos G., 229  
 Thulen, Joe, 248  
 Timberlake, L.E., 79  
 Tingley, Katherine, 18  
 Toberman, Mayor, 43  
 Tobin, E.J. and R.M., 179  
 Tocqueville, Alexis de, 68  
 Tolman, Richard, 233, 234  
 Tom Mix Ranch, 92  
 Torres, Art, 25  
 Towne & Bacon, 190  
 Townsend, Jonas H., 306  
 Tracy, Frederick P., 283  
 Transportation in Los Angeles, see "The Environment of Movement," 82-83  
 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 26  
 "Trenor Park: A New Englander in California," by Virginia Bell, 158-171  
 Truman, Ben C., 42  
 Truman, Stanley and Mathes, W. Michael  
*Missions*, rev. 194  
 Turrill, Charles B., 292  
 Tutarow, Norman E., *The Mexican-American War: An Annotated Bibliography*, rev., 379-380  
 UCLA Bruins, 96  
 USC Trojans, 96  
 Union Bank, 96  
 Union of Greek Women, 126  
 United California Bank, 88, 96  
 United Hellenic American Societies of San Francisco (UHAS), 127  
 United Irish Societies of San Francisco (UIS of S.F.), 175, 177  
 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), 130  
 United Railroad, 116  
*The University of Santa Clara, A History 1851-1977*, by Gerald McKevitt S.J., rev., 296-297  
 Unruh, Jess, 85  
 Updike, Daniel Berkeley, 190  
 U.S. Department of Agriculture, 249, 257  
 U.S.S. *Cheyenne*, 211, 213, 214, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 226  
 U.S.S. *H-1*, *H-2*, 211, 212, 213  
 U.S.S. *H-3*, 211-225 *passim*  
 U.S.S. *Milwaukee*, 211-226 *passim*  
 Vachell, Horace Annesley, 348  
 Valentino, Rudolph, 61  
 Vallejo, Mariano Guadalupe, 22  
 Vancouver, George, 16  
 Vasquez, Tiburcio, 115  
 Vellis, Vivian Stratis, 124  
 Venizelos, Prime Minister Eleutherios, 120  
 Verse Writers Club of Southern California, 38  
*Vindicator*, 311, 312, 313  
 Vizcaino, Sebastián, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14  
*Voices for the Earth: A Treasury of the Sierra Club Bulletin*, edited by Ann Gilliam, rev., 299  
 Waban, 138, 139  
 Wagner, Henry, 193  
 Wallace, Doctor Carl, 214  
 Walker, C.T., 248  
 Walker, Franklin, 39  
 Walker, Joseph Reddeford, 319  
 Warner, Charles Dudley, 42  
 Warren, Van Court, 295  
 Washington, Booker T., 12  
 Washington Ball Park, 182, 183  
*Washington Post*, 96  
 Watkins, Carleton E., 291, 292, 295  
 Watkins, T.H., "Down to the Sea in Lighters . . . Then Ships," 32-33  
 Watson, Earnest, 235  
 Watts District, 84  
 Weaver, John D., "The Laboratory of Marvels," 50-75; 100, 101  
 Weber, Francis J., *King of the Missions, A Documentary History of San Luis Rey de Francia and The Pronto Mission, A Documentary History of San Diego de Alcalá*, rev., 376-377  
 Weber, Kem, 73  
 Wells, H.G., 52, 73  
 Wells, Walter, 39  
 West Adams Heights, 74  
 West, Mae, 18  
 West, Nathanael, 39, 106  
 Western Air Express (Western Airlines), 58  
 Western Hotel, 284  
*Western Outlook*, 313, 314, 317  
 Weston, Brett, 295  
 Westwood Village, 92  
 Whig Party, 280, 283  
 White, Chief of Police Thomas, 175  
 White, Stephen M., 33, 48  
 Whitelaw, Captain, 216  
 Whitman, Walt, 346  
 Whitsett, W.P., 71  
 Whitton, Towne & Company, 190  
 Wiggins, Frank, 55  
 Wilcox, Ella Wheeler, 343  
 Wilde, J.A., 314  
 Wilde, Mayor Louis, 183  
 Willard, Charles Dwight, 48  
 William Faulkner & Son, 191  
 Williams, David A., rev. of Gant, *Santa Cruz, The Early Years, The Collected Historical Writings of Leon Rowland*, and Young, *Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains*, 199  
 Williams, Paul, 13  
 Williams, Virgil, 330  
 Wilshire Boulevard, 88, 92  
 Wilson, B.D., 10, 21  
 Wilson, Edmund, 68  
 Wilson, President Woodrow, 174, 175, 179  
 Winter, Robert, "The Architecture of the City Eclectic," 72-73  
 Wollenberg, Charles, "James vs. Marinsip: Trouble on the New Black Frontier," 262-279  
 World Trade Mart, 88  
 Women in Los Angeles, see "The Daughters of the Queen," 18-19  
 Women's National Confederation, 246  
 Wood, Benjamin, 169  
 Wood, Fernando, 161, 165  
 Woods, Rev. James, 31  
 Woodward, Henry A., 176  
 Wright, Frank Lloyd, 72, 106  
 Wrigley Field, 81  
 Wulzen, Albert H., 292  
 Wyler, William, 64, 65  
 Yang-Na, 9, 37, 46  
 Ye Alpine Tavern, 54  
 Yorke, Father Peter, 175, 176, 177, 179, 181  
 Yorty, Samuel, 84, 85, 87, 101  
 Yosemite Valley, 319  
 Young, John V., *Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains*, rev., 199  
 "'Your picture hangs in my salon,' The Letters of Gertrude Atherton to Ambrose Bierce," by Emily Leider, 332-349  
 Zukor, Adolph, 61

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